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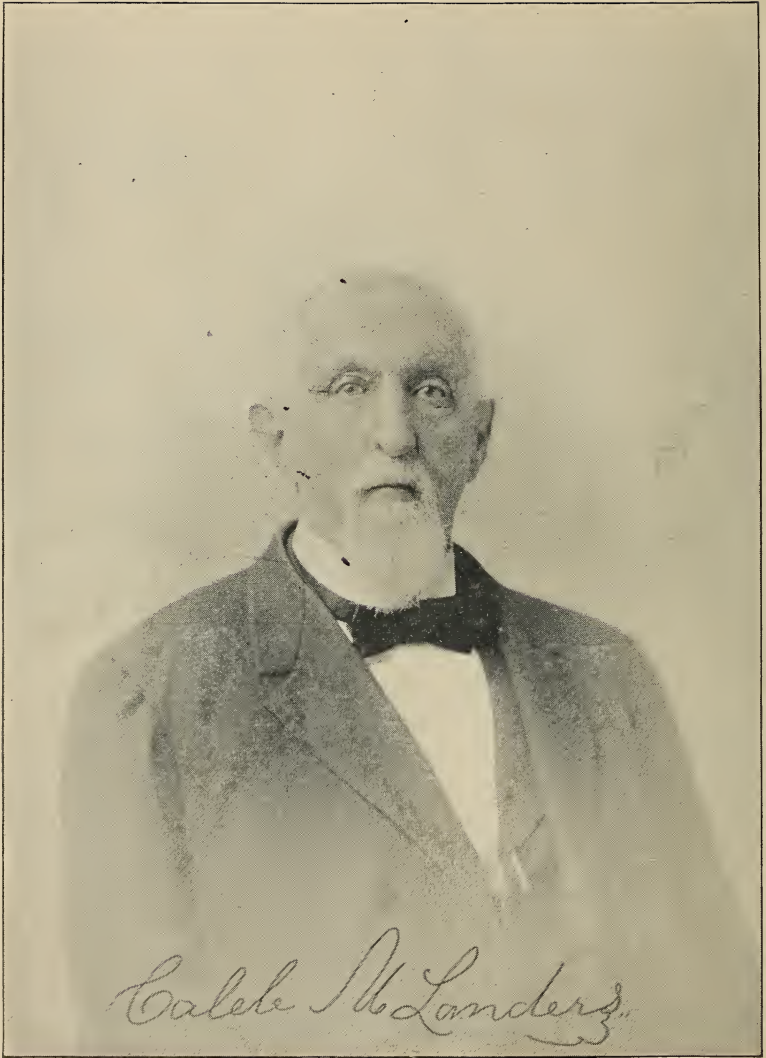
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Caleb M. Lander

# THE SKEPTIC'S DEFENSE

AGAINST

## ALL CHRISTIAN OR OTHER PRIESTS:

BEING

A SERIES OF MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS HAVING FOR  
THEIR MAIN OBJECT A COMPARISON OF THE  
VALUE OF SCIENCE OVER RELIGION.

BY

*Marshall*  
CALEB M. LANDERS.



ROCHESTER, N. Y.

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1895.

## DEDICATION.

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IF THE CLAIMS OF THE IGNORANT MASS OF  
HUMANITY ARE TO BE CONSIDERED OF ENOUGH IMPORTANCE  
TO GIVE THEM A RIGHT TO BE INSTRUCTED BY ONE OF THEIR OWN CLASS,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THEM AND HENCE NOT TO ANY  
WHO EXPECT TO FIND LITERARY STYLE IN ITS  
PAGES AT THE EXPENSE OF TRUTH.

THE AUTHOR.

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## PREFACE.

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The following pages contain some more or less pertinent observations and suggestions, respecting the attitude of Christian ministers, or, as they are more frequently called, priests, and their teachers who are called theologians, towards both skepticism and skeptics. It has been the writer's aim to adapt the language he has used to the comprehension of the unlearned or common average people, himself being one of that class. I want it to be distinctly understood that I have endeavored to write what this book contains in such a simple way as can be understood and comprehended by the illiterate masses of my fellowmen—by those who, like me, have not climbed high enough to see how vast, how infinite are the possibilities of human learning; for it is of no use for the unlearned to try to comprehend such language as the learned employ to convey their thoughts to the unlearned. No, dear reader, I am not learned, and you (if you can read at all) are only a little more ignorant than I am. You doubtless know many things I should be glad to learn; but I, in return, can instruct you on many things you, like me, have acquired by false instruction. So let us study together and endeavor to understand the meaning of the word "learned." I want to judge my readers by my own standard; for I know how eager and unquenchable is the thirst for such knowledge, as will forever settle the question of the ultimate destiny of humanity. I have settled it to my own satisfaction and, if you read this book through candidly and attentively, you will be able to judge how far it also meets your desires. Not understanding the rules of punctuation, I shall do the best I can to make my meaning clear enough to the reader for all practical purposes.

And the author has also endeavored to characterize the various religions which have been prevalent among mankind, in all ages and countries, in all time, as being nothing more or less than inventions or impositions, and frauds, and more especially the Christian religion, because that form seeks to supplant and supercede all others, and thus become universal by reason of its alleged superiority and its divine origin.

In order to accomplish this undertaking, it has been the purpose of the author to speak or write plainly and fearlessly, to use ridicule, sarcasm, abuse and denunciation when such weapons were required, to put



aside all solemnity or reverence and discuss what are commonly considered serious or solemn questions with the same freedom from superstitious awe as questions of a mere secular nature would be discussed. The great fault of speakers and writers, who are considered skeptics or free thinkers, has always been that they seem afraid that they may offend those whom they assail, and therefore they are very cautious in the use of epithets, and careful also not to disclose the full extent of their unbelief, seeming for the most part to wish to leave the impression of only a partial disagreement on some branches of unbelief. This is more obviously the case when some noted theologian refuses to longer be confined or restrained from giving expression, either orally or in written language, to some advanced theological opinion not held or approved of by his associates, and this reserve or care is adopted by him to prevent his being disciplined, so as to cause him to lose his position and thus cut off his income.

The same hesitation is manifest when non-religious men or, as they are sometimes called, infidels, write books or essays for the public. None of these have dared thus far to attack theologians and priests and show them to the world in their true character, as this writer has done in what is here written; and none have yet dared to attack the Bible and abolish God, the devil, heaven and hell, or Christ and the Apostles, and prove the religion they invented to be only an imposition and fraud, as this writer has done. Therefore this book is unique and is likely to find a ready sale, as it will supply a long-felt want for some bold writer to delineate in a familiar, plain manner, adapted to the comprehension of the common people, some of the reasons why these long-endured impositions should be immediately and forever abolished.

If this effort shall be in any degree an aid to this consummation, the author will be sufficiently rewarded for his labor. At the same time, no one is or can be more fully sensible or aware of the unpopularity of the task of holding up to contempt and to ridicule the religious sentiment of every form in general, and of the Christian form in particular, than is the writer of what follows in these pages; but, although I expect more or less ridicule, isolation and, perhaps, persecution in return, I do not fear or even dread them, because a few years hence—as always has been the case in all former reforms of abuses that have afflicted human society—the opinions of the thinking world will, by such premature introduction or presentation of what to the present generation appears absurd and untenable, start more or less of thinking minds into active examination or analysis of these extreme views, and the book or writing containing them will be doing its work modifying and changing, imperceptibly and slowly, existing errors when the hand that wrote these

advanced views is mingling with the dust and the mind that guided the hand will be extinct.

And if these imperfect writings should be the means of advancing by one single hour the inevitable progress of truth and justice, it would ensure the fame that rarely is secured during the lifetime of any of the reformers that have lived in past times. Without any doubt a learned person would have performed the task far better in many respects than I have; but on some accounts my want of learning is a great advantage. Thoughts do not range so freely when the brain is overloaded with a great variety of knowledge, and it secures a directness, or a bluntness and fearless expression, or definiteness, not met with in the use of more polished language. While it is true that a few extremely serious or sensitive persons do support, defend and revere Christianity on account of its alleged and to them real divine origin, they having been so instructed, and as thus indispensable to the welfare of nations as well as individuals, the great majority or mass of all people support it from a firm belief that it must be supported as a measure of security to the State, or a political and social necessity. These latter are only hypocrites, while the former are honest but mistaken.

I concede it to be not only lawful and right in itself, but also a duty for a person, if he has hopes, to guard against anything that might interfere with such hopes, but this only on the clearly ascertained condition that such hopes are well founded. The priest will tell you it is innate or natural to all human beings both to desire and to have a more or less extensive sense or apprehension of some form of religion. I deny this and say that heredity alone can explain the cause, and science has distinctly proved that it was not true of the primitive man any more than it is in other animals. Such being the case, what an unutterable outrage it is to attack an impressible mind, such as infants have at the outset of their existence, and give it any bias towards even science! But it is an intensely greater outrage to give such minds any religious bias; for no part of such teaching as is imparted, for instance, in the Sunday school has more than ethical value, entirely incapable of any proof, but it may have for some minds an imperceptible or imaginary value as a factor of culture. All these intricate subjects ought to be kept in reserve for mature intellects to grapple with later in life, without previous bias or being filled with impressions apparently half true or half false.

Whether the sentiments I have written are well received or not, whether I am forgiven or unforgiven, it is still satisfactory to my perception of propriety to have written the truth as I apprehend that truth. In coming to a conclusion to write what I have written, I fully realized

how dangerous to my reputation or to my standing in the community it would be to either say or write what you think, when such saying or such writing would conflict with the views of my associates; but when I considered that my mind was given me to enable me to think, and that my thoughts were given me to utter, either orally or in writing, and not to conceal or withhold for fear of reproach or contumely, I felt that it was a duty to give to others what I both see and know, that they may also see what, but for my discovery, might never have been suspected.

I have sometimes been impressed with the depressing thought, while taking such extreme grounds as to deny the very existence of any God whatever, or of any Jesus Christ except a fictitious one, or all systems of religion except such as are a mere invention of impostors, that, so far as I was aware, I was absolutely alone in the intellectual world; for no one not a Jew has ever dared to deny, or even to raise a question, that the Christ of the gospels has ever lived, or that he was never crucified. Everybody not a Jew, however ungodly, who was born and raised in any Christian country, admits without hesitation, or even examination, the truth of the gospels as to those facts. This book is intended and constructed to be miscellaneous and continuous, without the intervention of chapters, and with no pretence of regularity; but open it where you will it is rich in ridicule and sarcasm, and one who reads it through will have as rough a mental journey as his body would have if he were to ride in a vehicle without springs over a corduroy road, for it makes no pretensions either to scholarship or elegant phraseology.

In these writings I consider I have only cast off the unfounded superstitions of my earlier life in my later and maturer life; and, as I turn to face my inevitable and not distant end, nothing but a serene peace at the prospect of a complete annihilation of the body and mind, or soul, alike intervenes to worry or to disturb my confidence. For people who believe in a hereafter and choose, by listening to false instruction whether oral or between the lids of an untrue Bible, to contemplate and to anticipate a doubtful future life adorned with flames and peopled with devils on the one hand, or in an imaginary heaven of endless bliss on the other, I can imagine death to have its unpleasant side; but I have come to such a point, that I regard all such notions as both unphilosophical in the extreme and wholly untrue. Hence death for me has no terrors greater than any natural sleep has. The writer of this preface, and of what is in the book, has been made aware of the fact that, when anyone withdraws from the church to which he once belonged, the priests of that church, if such person was of enough consequence to attract their



notice or to fear their resentment, would become so maddened by sophistry, fanaticism and falsehood that they pretend to look upon this person as a dangerous foe whom it is their duty to destroy, because he has suddenly, as they say, become so lost to honor and virtue that no confidence is to be placed on his word, or character, for veracity; and, if such individual is of less consequence, his associates among whom he lives, and to whom he is attached by many ties of social or business interests, avoid him as they would a person having a contagious, deadly disease. Wherever this loathsome sink of iniquity, the priesthood of any form of religion, is permitted to as much as breathe, it will carry with it destruction and death to all doubters wherever it goes; for the great bulk of the dupes of these priests know nothing about the religion they profess and for the defence of which they are ready to fight and die. The glaring blemishes in the life of the fictitious Christ of the New Testament and of other founders of spurious systems, such as Mahomet and Joe Smith, are studiously ignored, and the priest exaggerates common morality into supreme virtue when coming from this immaculate source. So my apology for writing the following pages is to acknowledge my error in following false instruction so long, and to caution all others, especially the young and impressible, against falling into the snares of the priests who are always ready to seize upon the young and confiding, to make of them obedient dupes by which to perpetuate and strengthen imposition and fraud.

I have to ask the reader of these pages not to judge of its merits or demerits by some isolated passages, but by its general spirit; for I could not give full expression to my thoughts without the delineation of various views each of which is only true when taken as a whole or with others, while a single statement by itself may be false because it expresses one thing only. The truth is only a compromise with many things, so that what I have aimed to inculcate in this book is a contempt for all religion without any exception, for they are all not only false but pernicious.

The thoughts recorded in the book to which this preface is attached have nearly all been written, in various seasons of leisure, when the author was more than 75 years old, with but little prospect that he would live to see them printed. But as his life has been extended much beyond his expectation, and to prevent the easy destruction of a single copy of manuscript, and having also been unexpectedly provided with the means to do so, he has concluded to be his own publisher of enough copies to be so widely distributed that it will be impossible to extinguish the whole, no matter how anxious the priests and their dupes may be to do so. I flatter myself that, perhaps, some people would read these

honest pages not without profit to themselves, and that the coming generations, who are sure to be somewhat uncertain what road to follow, would be pleased to find out how an old, illiterate man, very frank and very sincere, expressed some of his thoughts at the end of his career when face to face with only his past to look back upon and no future to anticipate or wish for.

C. M. LANDERS.

Ridgeland, N. Y., September 6th, 1895.

## THE SKEPTIC'S DEFENSE.

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Before entering on the principal theme treated in the following pages, it has been considered advisable instead of actually praying for the success to be expected from its perusal to produce conviction in the mind of the reader to take the reverse course and so characterize that exercise that it will appear useless. The priest never expects success in his calling without first, in the middle, and at the end, praying. On the other hand this author is content to trust to the merit of the work itself and not worry any God or even devil to interfere, but I will give expression to some thoughts that have arisen since I have abandoned the practice of extemporaneous praying.

A specialist in the treatment of any form of bodily malady becomes skillful in the treatment of such malady in proportion to the length of time which he has put in practice his peculiar way of treatment and the number whom he has treated, and thereby a reputation is established which secures to such an individual sufficient notoriety to enable him to secure a fortune in a short time more especially, however, provided he can fortify his reputation by showing favorable results, and this is not difficult when ignorance and credulity are the only obstacles to be encountered. A few names forged to highly sensational certificates to nearly miraculous cures is in most cases all that is required to cause the sufferer to apply to this wonderful specialist and procure remedies and advice to effect the desired cure. This causes the one who endeavors to cure these special maladies to mix and compound various nostrums having, as he alleges, the virtues necessary for success and these are sold to those who do not apply in person, but become customers on the principle of faith. This, or a like process, has been extended and applied to praying indiscriminately and persistently by the set of holy experts or specialists who profess to be able to secure any result asked for more certainly, however, when the applicant can furnish the required amount of money to be an equivalent for the favor desired. The same result is had in one case as the other where no money is provided; all result is only fictitious and imaginary, consequently worthless, a mere device of imposition and fraud, humbug and deception ever since and wherever it has been practiced. There would be some excuse for the practice of this silly mummerly if the most searching inquiry or the most diligent study of every one's own experience who has indulged in this useless

practice, as the writer of these lines has for many years, could or would show the least benefit ever realized except to in some cases hide some moral deformity from those who regard the practice of praying as an evidence of virtue and purity of character, that this practice is erroneously supposed to indicate to be present with the one who has and uses this gift, not for a moment suspecting that one so closely related to God as to dare to address Him as Father, and Intimate Friend, can have and practice any moral deformity. The discovery of many cases of the most fearful depravity in the person of numerous hypocrites who have worked under this cloak for many years, and without being suspected on account of their devotional and apparently honest aspect, have committed the most outrageous crimes against both uprightness in financial integrity, but have been guilty of the most flagrant social debauchery that the criminal courts can furnish a record of, and it may with certainty be inferred that where one case of this nature comes to light a hundred are never discovered.

Prayer being universal among the different nations of the human race, without reference to any peculiar form of religious belief, and being considered by those who use it as of the highest importance it seems appropriate to investigate the subject with a view to discover its origin, its necessity, its utility, or value. Ever since the human animal has been sufficiently developed from the low form from which, after many ages of gradual approximation to a fully developed specimen as we now see him, he emerged; he has been able to reflect on the position he occupies in the material world and compare his own condition with that of the various forms of animal life from which he sprung, and over which he is able to exert a controlling power; also to reflect on the subordinate position he himself occupies with reference to, or with what he has been taught to believe is a superior being to which he is mysteriously related, and by which he feels himself in some measure restrained, and to which he is compelled to submit. This feeling of inferiority and dependence finally reached that point that found its fullest realization in the natural relation of parent and child, which needed no other demonstration than what natural affection spontaneously furnished, and in time reached that degree of perfection that caused the child to instinctively look to its parent for a continual and ample supply of its many wants and necessities until such a state of maturity was reached when the efforts of the child and its experience enabled it to dispense with the care of the parent and provide for not only its own wants, but in turn the wants of his own children. This process of continual reproduction has continued ever since the first beginning of the process, however remote in the past we can imagine it to have begun, and is destined to



continue as long as time shall last, and makes a condition of things from which no change is possible, and in a properly constituted mind is not desirable, but the dissatisfaction of the greater part of the human race with their surroundings and the hope that some change may better their condition, led the best developed specimens of the race of primitive man to faintly conceive the notion that finally reached the idea that there must be a God who occupied the same relation to man as his child that he himself did as the father of his children to them, and consequently he could be influenced by prayer and supplication, and only required to be informed of their wants to immediately respond in the manner and to the extent desired. The foregoing is as reasonable a definition of the way prayer originated as can be produced, but is not put forth as an actual fact, nothing better than conjecture, and no one can invent a better or more reasonable origin; and having once begun, notwithstanding no one in all the vast number, in all ages and countries, who have continually and persistently prayed for every imaginable blessing, and have never in so much as one instance received the least recognition or response, it has continued, till at present it is universal under the same transmitted false conclusions, for none of the assumptions relied upon to justify these conclusions have any reality. It is therefore fair and reasonable to conclude, that in order for prayer to be of any use, the being to whom this prayer is directed must be real not imaginary, just as real as the living and visible parent is to the needy and helpless child, and must be accessible and so changeable that none of the laws of nature that are unceasingly in spontaneous operation producing results so directly opposite from what this applicant for a change in his favor is asking for, that in order to get a favorable answer to his prayer all the forces of nature must be suspended or altered so that to gratify all the numerous and various applications would make it impossible for any of the works of nature to go on, and as it is evident that none of the laws of nature have ever ceased to operate for an instant, the conclusion is irresistible that the aggregate impression that the human race have made since the first prayer was offered, is not equal to the effect one drop of water would have to raise the level of the ocean. Why then is this useless ceremony kept up and insisted on as indispensable to human welfare? It is simply what the inventors of this stupendous humbug intended it should be a superstitious reverence for what has no existence to keep alive what ought to have never had any life. The utility or value of prayer as a means of procuring any desired result has so long and thoroughly been tested, that any reasonable person would naturally suppose that those who use it and pretend to rely upon it would be discouraged in placing any further reliance on what has never been any-

thing but absolute failure, and such would be the case if no instruction on that subject was from time to time received to the effect that those prayers will avail in some mysterious manner to cause results to be favorable that would without prayer prove unfavorable.

It will be remembered that when the great and good President Lincoln was shot by that worthless wicked villain, Wilkes Booth, and was not instantly killed, but was so severely wounded that absolutely no hope was ever given by his attending medical or surgical experts that he could possibly live more than a few hours, the fools called ministers and all other grades of religious sapheads united in asking the God who they pretend to be so familiar with and who they rely upon to give a favorable answer to any unreasonable petition they are pleased to invent, to suspend all the laws of cause and effect and do that which if he were simple enough to do would entitle him to more censure than he was exposed to when he allowed his assailant to place him in the situation to need any supernatural help. The whole combined prayers of the nation of the various churches of the individuals were not sufficient to add one instant to the life of Lincoln beyond what it would have been if nothing had been said.

The same result was again realized when President Garfield was shot by Guiteau, and languished several months between life and death, thus giving abundant time for the most liberal exercise of the praying faculties of the whole mass of those who pretend to have influence with the Almighty to if possible produce a favorable result. No such result was had and not one instant was added to the time which was allotted by natural causes when death must ensue, nor one particle of pain or suffering was averted.

The praying fools had not learned anything yet so they resorted to prayer again. When Grant had a fatal malady, earnest, universal and persistent prayer to avert, if possible, the fatal results that the experience of the medical world in all time, had arrived at, that the cancer of the throat which Grant had could not be either cured or relieved and speedy death was inevitable and his life was not prolonged one instant, or one throb of pain was averted by all this useless effort. The same result is always experienced in all families in which some of their loved ones are in danger of death or disaster; with individuals when they are in trouble or danger, and with every grade and kind of ministers who are more expert from much and long practice, than is the one who seldom prays, or the mere child who repeats the Lord's prayer as soon as they can be learned the words.

Another instance of the failure of prayer when the most noted orthodox Baptist minister of modern times, if not of all times, the great

Charles H. Spurgeon, was prostrated by a malady which seemed to be likely to prove mortal as it finally did, but before the end came there was an interval of about six months, thus giving ample time for the praying faculties of the whole orthodox Christian world to indulge the praying craze to its utmost limit without any cessation or want of faith, but without also any mitigation of suffering or averting a fatal termination. Is it not one of the most wonderful impositions the world contains, that a set of men called priests, can so impress upon their dupes that these priests by standing before an audience and closing their eyes can extemporaneously construct a prayer which shall include every subject which this sanctimonious hypocrite can either call to mind or invent, and these listeners who have been taught to also close their eyes bow their heads, and often their knees, and also unite in this universal prayer and adopt it as their own and expect a favorable answer when all their previous experience has proven that there is not the least change in a single case from what would have been without this foolish mockery. There never was and there never will be a human being that has the ability to either form or express the slightest conception of either the being of the God to whom they pray or the place where He resides, and therefore his existence is only imaginary and this statement can be extended to a future life about which the whole human family in all the ages have been inquiring, and there never was, or never will or can be, any uniformity in a conception of any future life, simply and only because there is nowhere or never has been given the slightest intimation of a future life except a wish and an unfounded expectation unauthorized from any reliable source that a reunion of broken ties of love and esteem will again be revived when the final destiny of the race shall be ascertained at the judgment day. Pray on, ye crazy fanatics, if it is any benefit to you as individuals, but do not urge and demand others to likewise pray for simply that reason and do not instruct either your children or any one else to contract this useless habit while they are too young to realize that it is a vain waste of energy and a mere solemn mockery. Let it not be supposed that the writer has had no experience or exercise of the praying faculty; for while he does not profess to having been an expert yet he was for many years after maturity was reached, a sincere, honest, praying man, a fair sample of the average church member, but leaves on record the above advice for others.

Some experienced experts pretend that the exercise of the praying faculty causes a sort of reflex action on the individual who keeps that faculty in use, but that is purely imaginary, hence all this waste of effort has been of no use to either those prayed for or to those who pray. The Catholic, the Episcopalian or the Lutheran do not themselves make



an extemporaneous prayer, they merely read such prayers as are composed for their use by the bishops, and are printed in the prayer book provided they are able to read. If they are not able to read the pious Catholic devotee is provided with a rosary consisting of a string of beads divided into sections, by inserting a larger bead at the end of one set of prayers so that a change of subjects to need prayers to be mentally repeated may be known when those beads are reached. These prayers so imagined to have been said have the same reflex benefit on the ignorant dupe who uses the beads as the most eloquent oral pronunciation of the same words have on the most devout and highly educated dupe. They are both wholly except imaginary, useless so that no mode of praying has any value over any other mode it is only so much mistaken duty done and gives the same satisfaction in one case as the other. Very little is known about the Mahometan or Jews' prayers except that they pray much, but for what reason is not apparent.

The supposed necessity of prayer is caused by reason of the sense of want of various kinds, and also by the sense of dependence on some supernatural being from whom they have been previously taught to expect both the ability and wish to grant any and every unreasonable and impossible request, and more especially, in case of dire extremity, when in extreme danger, when no escape seems possible, as in fire or shipwreck, when those that have no right to expect any supernatural assistance are often the most energetic in supplication and as sensitive to realize their dependence on such aid, and as much entitled to receive it, as are the most pious and devout hypocrites, for in both cases only false instruction has taught the individual that supernatural help is promised to meet all emergencies, and is at all times to be had for the simple ceremony of asking, but this asking must be accompanied with sufficient faith to produce the result asked for, or in other words a belief that the being to whom this request is made is a reality, and is both able and willing to grant this needed assistance, and that no other process can secure any relief. This was a very shrewd movement on the part of those impostors who contrived this scheme of deception and fraud, prayer, but its failure to produce any of the expected results ought to have demonstrated to the deluded votaries of these unscrupulous impostors that some glaring defect was found to exist when this praying device came to be tested, but the answer to all these objections was a lack of faith, which in all cases was necessary to get any favorable result, consequently repetition after repetition must be made persistently till finally the desired favor would be had, if not in a direct, visible way, still in some imperceptible and equally satisfactory manner. The value of prayer as an accompaniment of other religious qualifications is



always regarded in all orthodox sects as of the first importance, and a natural endowment added to much practice often enables the individual so favored to become conspicuous and highly valued in the church of which he is a member, as being able to hold such near and familiar intercourse with the possessor and giver of all good that his acquirements and services are often of more value than one who is merely able to address his fellowmen, however eloquent he may be, especially when he has acquired the faculty to modulate the tones of his voice, which are so adapted to express the various emotions of the listener, as to impress him with his sincerity and influence with the almighty ruler of all. In order that the novice in the art of praying (for it is only an art or accomplishment) may have the chance to acquire sufficient practice to become expert in that acquirement, prayer meetings and meetings for the Society of Christian Endeavor are appointed for practice, both to learn to pray well and to relate their experience in the struggle they have engaged in, to endeavor to live as is supposed to be necessary when one starts in the course of Christian duty.

These meetings are conducted by some designated skillful expert and after a few lessons and a few attempts to compose a suitable petition, the victim, who is found to be himself a leader, gets most of the practice, being most frequently given the position and assigned to that duty, and working in a skillful way on the emotions of the listeners, and shedding a few crocodile tears, and modulating the voice to indicate earnestness and faith, can so impress the sympathetic emotional nature of more or less of his listeners that they too are persuaded after much hesitation to begin the same absurd round of supposed necessary struggle to make the acquaintance of the imaginary being who holds the destiny of all beings in his power, and who is supposed to require an unconditional surrender of his whole mental faculties to the molding influence of the spiritual guide who assumes to be authorized to administer the sacraments prescribed by the hierarchy of the church, and admit him to examination, and if found worthy, also admit him into full communion and fellowship and start him on the journey towards heaven and the rewards he may expect, as a compensation for the liberal gifts of money which he is assured is so much treasure laid up in heaven; and also what is necessary in order to keep this system of fraud and deception from dying out.

The atheist and other infidels are the only beings who never pray, and they are as much in need of the benefit to be derived from that ceremony as any of the rest of the race, but they are in no sense inferior in their intellectual or moral nature to the most highly gifted among those who make prayer their chief reliance, and they can show as many great minds in their ranks in proportion, as can any branch of theists.

No man that has ever lived is great in all departments of knowledge, but all have special acquirements in some of which they excel, and because some great minds are conceded to belong to praying men is no indication that they are made so by prayer or any kind of religious belief, in fact they are perceptibly dwarfed by such belief in God as to for a moment suppose that cause and effect will ever cease to operate by any quantity or quality of importunity, when the individual who makes these unreasonable requests is continually violating both moral and physical laws, and then goes and asks his heavenly father, or in other words, his God, to also violate his established laws, which he has no more ability or even right to do than his children have, and never has done, or never will interfere with the precise and unvarying operation of nature's laws.

If the time ever comes when the various grades of atheists and infidels becomes sufficiently numerous to safely assail by sarcasm and ridicule the praying portion of the community, among which they reside, to the extent to make them ashamed to indulge in this useless performance, those that come later on the stage will be filled with wonder and astonishment, not much short of indignation, and be inclined to pity the silly dupes, that so long were made such by false instruction.

The orthodox Christian has invented a mediator, through whom these holy impostors who invent all these absurd doctrines, tell them and they believe it, they may hope to reach the eternal father, who is so highly offended with the human race because they inherited the fallen nature of Adam when it was impossible to avoid it, that he will not notice any prayer to him unless they mentioned the name of Christ in connection with such prayer, thus making it wholly useless for those that never heard of any Christ to pray at all, as well as those that have heard of him, but do not believe him to be more than human, forgetting that this same mediator when he was human; the same as every other human being, appealed directly to the eternal father of all humanity without any mediator and instructed his dupes, who are called now disciples, in the so-called Lord's prayer to ignore any mediator, and this notion of mediator in all the Roman Catholic portion of the Christian world is extended so as to require a sub-mediator, the Virgin Mary, who is first to be approached by the penitent, and she then approaches her son, and he not having sufficient power to forgive sin, and having to trust to the vacillating and changeable disposition of his father is not prepared to render a positive answer, but merely a hope that forgiveness will ultimately come, but there can be no hope unless the price is paid in money as well as faith. Such is the Roman Catholic plan of salvation through a mediator; any more false instruction than this it is impossible to conceive.

False instruction is directly responsible for all this waste of time, energy and money in a worse than useless mock mummery called prayer. Those even among the most devout, who wholly neglect to pray at all, are just as prosperous and happy and more so than those are who have allowed themselves to be made dupes of by a set of unscrupulous designing villains, under the false impression that it was both necessary and beneficent when the reverse is the exact truth.

By far the most foolish example of the importance of prayer is that recorded in several places in the gospels, when Jesus Christ is represented as himself engaging in prayer, sometimes for himself, as when he was approaching the time when in consequence of the outrageous conduct which had made him so odious to the people, that they had resolved on his destruction and disbanding the gang that he was leading round the country, he leads them into a private garden to endeavor to elude the police who were about to arrest him, he there prays for deliverance, and with what result? None at all. The arrest was made, but the thing most to be noticed is the Almighty God praying to himself, for if Jesus Christ was not God then neither his teachings or example on this subject of prayer is of the least importance, and if he is God it needs no prayer to produce any result wished for.

One of the most glaring lies is to be found in the 12th chapter of John's gospel, 27-30, where there is an appeal to his Father to be saved from the hour of death and a confession that he was for this cause come to this hour, for what cause if not that he might be saved? and well knowing he would not be saved, for if he was, the work of the world's salvation could never be completed, and then adds, father glorify thy name, and this petition is answered in these words: "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." If there was any assurance that this prayer or any other that is attributed to Christ was ever made, this answer would rest on the same assurance and this single instance is the only one to be found either between the lids of the Bible, or in the experience of all the praying fanatics that the world has ever produced, where either a verbal or any other answer has been either received or even expected, and the very next verse distinctly denies that any other sound but a clap of thunder was heard, or as some said, an angel spake to him.

Now it would be interesting to know how absurdity could go any further than this, but this unproved absurdity is just as firmly believed as the most natural proposition would be, simply because it is in the Bible and the Bible is true, unquestionably, so we have been instructed, and are now being instructed with as much assurance by the priests as if no one would dare to either dispute or doubt its assertions.



Another example of this monstrous inconsistency of God praying to himself, is found in the 17th chapter of John, where a whole chapter is used to record an imaginary prayer, not one word of which was heard by any living person, or any record made of it, and the most of it was for others besides himself, but in any way you please to regard it, wholly unauthorized and unnecessary, and no answer was ever received or expected for it is simply the late invention of some impostor who had a gift in that direction, and is similar in its import to those printed prayers that fill the most of the prayer books, and enable the weakest and most ignorant dupe to pray as eloquently and with the same success as the bishop himself, who composed them, in both cases, none at all. It will always remain one of the greatest of wonders why such a useless waste of energy was not discovered and abandoned after simply one trial and such would have been the case if the priests had not interfered and encouraged perseverance, because if praying was to cease, a large diminution in the revenue of the priests would occur.

It will be conceded by all reasonable persons, that, when any subject as important as religion is supposed to be, and is universally admitted to be, outside of skepticism, that, before any individual of sufficient mental capacity to comprehend even the rudiments of that subject believes it, he would demand at least some proof, before receiving, or believing such teachings, or statements, as are put forth and relied on by those who instruct such as employ them for that purpose, and not be satisfied with mere assertion, more especially, when any event or occurrence, miraculous in its nature, is related, as confirmatory of any statement of such teacher. Superstition, as long as it can be early introduced in the training of the young, and continued by such instruction as is imparted by the Sunday-school, is confidently relied upon, by the designing hypocritical villains called priests, to enable them to control, usurp, and finally destroy, the ability of their dupes, to either investigate this important matter for their own satisfaction, or even desire to do so; therefore, as long as this priestly influence can be maintained, so long will superstition be their main reliance, but when a reaction occurs, by means of which this superstition is gradually weakened, and finally is overthrown, by the discovery being made in some unexpected way, that this religious belief is incapable of verification, or is barren of any real benefit, and is only a superstitious reverence for what has not reality, he consequently abandons the very idea of religion, as he would desert a medical quack, when he had ascertained to his satisfaction he was such, or reject a spurious coin.

The priests of the Christian form of religion, with which we are most directly concerned, have, in order to give us that assured verity which

seemed to them essential, given us as they assert, but do not as much as attempt to prove, an infallible standard of truth, contained in an inspired revelation, or book they name the "Holy Bible." This, they impudently assure us, is produced by the writers whose names in most cases they bear, acting as clerks, through or by whom the eternal God who made all things, dictated to them what they recorded. So far, this assertion rests only on the unsupported statement of a set of vile impostors, who directly are interested to have this imposition received without question, and, when we ask them how do you know this to be so? They reply, we are told so by a certain religious newspaper, and by certain books and ancient teachers, which have credit among a limited handful of the world's inhabitants, and if we are as anxious for verification of this statement as we ought to be in so serious a matter, we ought not to be satisfied, merely because they were told so, for religious newspapers, like others, are not infallible; they make mistakes, and, the same reason applies to books and religious teachers, they all make mistakes; and, therefore, this assertion of theirs, that the Bible is the inspired word of God, or was dictated by him, not only may be, but undoubtedly is a mistake, and more than a mere mistake, an intentional, wilful lie, or imposition, and, it is one of the strangest of the operations of the human mind, that, when on minor subjects they require ample proof before conviction of its truth, on this the most important of all subjects, so regarded by these same persons, because it extends into eternity. They are too indolent to investigate, or too indifferent to care whether it is true or not.

The doctrine of the orthodox Christian church, or that branch outside of the Catholic portion of that corrupt organization, is as follows: The bible is the supreme authority, over both the church and the reason, and is free from mistake or error, and, as we have it, is just as it came from God, its author, and even in its punctuation, (which is of recent invention), this quality of inspiration is extended, and also in its numerous translations and revisions; God has continually superintended its revisions, and prevented any errors, or mistakes, also that the miracles it records have been wrought or caused by the operation of natural laws and forces; that no decree or law, is, or has ever been changed, and that no prediction of his which all the prophecies in the Bible are, has failed or will fail of fulfillment; that man was created perfectly holy, and woman, and all other forms of animal and vegetable life, were produced as the Bible asserts in its first chapters they were and much more of the like import. This is substantially the opinion inculcated by all the theologians in the orthodox sects, and is so taught and expressed in all their symbols. Who told them all this? For, if we should grant

that the Bible is infallible, we still must hold their testimony is insufficient, because they are fallible witnesses, and confess to their own blunders; therefore, we have not reached a foundation which is better than sand or mire, and it will not do to build any hope of heaven, or be tormented with any fear of hell, on such a foundation; so that we must go back further, and there we find those we have been told are reformers, who were not only obliged, but compelled to assert the infallibility of the bible, as the standard of truth; but who and what were the reformers, and how did they know? They might have been in some respects above the average of their contemporaries, but they were not infallible, and had no better means than we have, if as good, to arrive at such a conclusion, and only reached it after fierce debate among themselves, for the reason, that it was an absolute necessity laid upon them, to maintain their position of separation, and also to strengthen, and perpetuate their wicked imposition.

In place of an infallible church, and an infallible Pope, they must have another infallibility, after leaving them, and that infallibility they decided, on such slim authority must be the Bible. Were they right in this decision? Because if they were not, the reference to them, only weakens the appeal to them; for, if they were not infallible, they might be mistaken, and they all distinctly confessed their fallibility. They also denied that the church as a whole was infallible, therefore, the testimony of these reformers is worthless, and so we are driven back beyond the reformers, to the church from which the reformers revolted. That church sheds no light on the infallibility of the Bible, for they never taught such a doctrine. We all know that there was a time when there was no Bible, either the old or new testament, as we have it, and the old testament as the Jews have it, a vast quantity of writing, by so-called holy or inspired men, some designated portions of which, were allowed to be read, and explained in the early Christian assemblies, for, contemporaneous histories of the church, and also secular, both state and amply confirm these facts, but, there is no where to be found the shadow of proof, that any of these writings have come down to our times, but the books and fragments which have been collected, and called the new testament, for anything which we know to the contrary, are all fictitious, and the real authors entirely unknown, or the time when they were written, but, profane history informs us, that about three hundred and sixty of the Christian era, so-called, delegates from various portions of the Roman empire, came together in council or convention at Laodicea, and after much deliberation and earnest discussion, agreed upon an official or authorized list of the writings extant of these so-called holy men, which they then and there considered were divinely inspired, and



these only were permitted to be read in the public assemblies, and all others not in that list were excluded. The epistles of James, the second epistle of Peter, second and third epistles of John, and Revelations, were prohibited, as uninspired, and therefore spurious, as were about fifty others which were offered to be received or rejected, and were all rejected; but a later council admitted the epistle of James, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, and Revelations, and that is the actual process, by means of which what we now call the new testament was got together, and passed along near two thousand years, receiving on the way, many translations and revisions, till at last we have it, as a revelation direct from the Eternal God, without as the priests tell us, either the suspicion or possibility of error.

The most notorious thing to be taken into the account in connection with the preceding description of how our authority was derived, or produced, is, that all the theologians, and all the ministers and teachers of every grade, are not only aware of the facts as above stated, but are engaged in a deep plot, to not only deceive the people, by insisting that this Bible on which they found their right to teach, is both divinely inspired and literally true, because they can thus earn a living, when they know it is not, but to also by means of this imposition, rob them of as much of their substance, in the name of the Lord, by extracting from their dupes a sufficient sum each year, to enable them to live and raise an expensive family in luxurious ease, and at the same time propagate and perpetuate this vile imposition. These unscrupulous impostors, called theologians, have always fought science in all its efforts to enlighten the world, because, if it was permitted to become far enough advanced, to be able to prove their statements, such, as that the earth was a sphere, and revolved on its axis, causing day and night, and other like discoveries that scientific inquiry might disclose, if not vigorously opposed, would conflict with the teaching of revelation, as taught by these rascally theologians, which dare not attempt to prove any of their unfounded statements, to such an extent as to perceptibly weaken if not wholly destroy the whole wicked system. But in spite of this determined opposition, which has materially hindered and delayed science, so that it has only quite lately become far enough advanced in several directions, that it can now compel theologians to admit, that the account which the bible gives of the origin of man, as well as of the earth and all material things, is open to at least some doubt, and, further than that, has compelled the admission by many of the most able theologians, that the Bible is not inspired, or any more trustworthy or reliable than any other ancient literature. When this reluctant admission becomes general, as science will soon force it to become, the foundation on which

the Christian church, and also the Jewish church is built, will be destroyed, and the bible will be reduced to the same level as other ancient books, as to its divine character, and the miracles which it relates, will be revealed to be only humbug. Science is still (in consequence of the opposition it encounters by religion) in its infancy, far behind its deserved position, but is now being advanced by a large and constantly increasing body of determined men, of such ability, as theologians dare not encounter in debate, who are, however, pursuing their investigations, not for the purpose of destroying any particular system of religion, but only for the laudable purpose of discovering the truth, so as to be able not only to assert, but also demonstrate it to be true. Astronomers of the highest reputation, now are bold enough to deny, in the newspapers that have the widest circulation, such statements as are made by the accounts, that the gospel by Matthew gives, of the star of Bethlehem, and prove as well as assert, that there never was any star there at all, and if the account of the star is taken away from that foolish story, it destroys its credibility in every other of these incredible statements, and that results in throwing doubt on anything this writer asserts, and also all the other writers who repeat any statements made by him, as Mark and Luke do in many of their statements, but vary the statements so as to show in some cases a plain contradiction, and this contradiction destroys the theory of divine inspiration of any of its parts, for inspiration must be uniform to be genuine.

If the Christian theologians, in process of time, become willing to admit that the Christ delineated in the gospels is merely and only historical, and therefore is not a sufficient basis or foundation on which to build so magnificent a structure as the doctrine of the atonement is, in the estimation of all orthodox Christians, it will then be in order or proper to inquire as to the credibility of the historian or writer of such history.

Many, and perhaps most readers of history, consider the statements made in such histories reliable. This is a great mistake. History, whether ancient or modern, is made up or compiled by a class of men, in any age or country, who have adaptation and special facilities to get at facts of enough consequence in his judgment to be worthy of mention, or preservation, and these facts are extracted from the preserved lives of some more or less conspicuous individuals written by some admirers or else by some enemy of this person or party and in most cases the scribe who writes, adds to or omits what his individual bias dictates. Later the ruling power or editor to whom this manuscript is submitted for publication or preservation, is sure to expunge what is considered detrimental to his interests or that of the state and an essential group of



facts are overlooked, and others misstated so that every historical record is so far from reliability that very little dependence is the safest guide to use, as to its value, until it has been confirmed by contemporaneous historians, and these confirmations have been investigated and sifted by able scholars, who are gifted with the skill of detectives, for many ancient histories, such as Heroditus, Pliny, Livy, Tacitus, Seutonius, and the others were all written by the permission and under the supervision of the then monarch, who personally examined and approved or condemned them; therefore, history never can more than imperfectly satisfy the demand for knowledge of the past, when even a full knowledge is required before any correct judgment can be had, because all history is obliged to omit a thousand times more than it attempts to report and so history of any kind is of very little value to any student to employ as a basis on which to found any system adapted to his own times or conditions. Too scanty an amount of resource is as fatal to the truth of history as is too great an abundance of sources, and both are used in every compilation, and when to this is added the personal bias of every historian, it is evident that but small reliance is to be placed on any statement. Still as this is our only resource to acquaint ourselves with national or individual events of a long past age, it must be accepted for what it may be worth else the study of history is rendered entirely useless.

While it may be admitted that the leading events recorded in any ancient history which are corroborated, or certified to by other contemporaneous writers are reliable, the accompanying details are always more or less contradictory, and therefore unreliable. As the history at the outset of any ancient people, or individual, is more or less vitiated or corrupted by fable, we ought not to be more particular about the origin and development of ancient religion, such as the Buddhist, the Brahmanistic, the Confucian, etc., than we are towards the Egyptian, Greek, or Roman. The main facts in each case may be historically true, and some, or perhaps many of the details false, as for instance: We are told that Confucius was born five hundred and fifty-one years before other history says Christ was, and that he died four hundred and seventy-five years before Christ was born, and that he was not the originator of any system, but only a reformer of a religion long before invented, and this whole system was recorded in four books of theology, but that this ancient system had become corrupt, and the age so dissolute, that, when he appeared, he was seen to be the needed instrument to restore Buddhism to its former purity, and this purity applied as much to political, national, and family purity, as to religious.

Buddhism existed ages before any other known form, and is the parent, or germ, from which have sprung every other, but itself is now nearly extinct, found nowhere on earth but in two widely separated localities, Thibet and Ceylon. Such forms as Brahmanism and Hinduism, derived their existence from Buddhism, and include more adherents at the present time than all other religions combined, and these others have all originated in or from them. The Jewish form of religion can be distinctly traced to them, in its main characteristics, and, instead of being divinely transmitted, as the rascally authors pretend it was, it was only copied.

The Persian was invented as was supposed by Christna, but on analysis it is found to be only copied by him, and handed along by Zoroaster and from it, Christianity was copied, and the name itself of the hero or head, which fiction invented as its originator, was obtained by simply dropping the two final letters, leaving Christ, and that is the real origin of Christ, and Christianity, instead of its miraculous origin, as delineated in the four gospels. It thus becomes a question of the first importance, how far are the sources from which ancient history is derived to be relied on, or what do they really say? This all depends on the ability, and the willingness of the writer thereof to tell the truth fully. This must be said with reference to the dependence to be put on ancient history, more especially, for in that we are the most concerned in this connection, but this applies to all history. First as to the ability of the historian; we must be informed how far he was in a position to be himself aware of the facts, and to what extent his penetration is to be trusted in such matters as he records; also, besides his ability to tell the truth, is he willing to tell it unbiased, for, in many cases he may have reasons or motives of his own, for concealing, or withholding the truth, or even substituting an untruth, and this tendency would not be of so much importance, in any secular or any worldly transaction, as it is, when the whole eternal salvation of the whole human race, is made to depend on the precise accuracy of every statement made in the bible, on which such salvation depends. If that is erroneous in the slightest particular, it vitiates the whole, as for instance, if the Christ of the gospels was not introduced into this world, in the precise way described by Matthew, he never came at all; and if he did come in that way, or any other way, and was not executed in the way these gospels all assert he was, he might as well not have come at all.

Without stopping to inquire at this stage, as to the probability of the story of the first advent, let us analyze those stories of these gospels or narratives, that give rise to the belief of the Christian portion of the world, that Christ was actually crucified, and here let it be stated, that,

if this unfounded belief cannot be established from this purely one-sided source, it cannot be established at all; for the archives, or records of the Roman empire as it was at the time when Pilate and Herod had authority in Judea, and which record all important events of their administration, and which can now be consulted if any doubt the statements, as well as all contemporaneous history, are entirely silent as to any such events having transpired in any province of the Roman empire.

It must be said in the outset of any inquiry into this question, it is indispensably necessary to banish supernaturalism or belief in the miraculous, and examine it according to the merely one-sided evidence which these gospels furnish, and not place any dependence on our faith, or previous bias, as it was produced by our early false instruction, for every candid mind will unhesitatingly admit, that false instruction is no evidence for any proposition. Perhaps the gospels do not fully disclose the fact, but it will not be disputed, or if it is there is a great abundance of historical unanimity which can be cited as proof, that the Jews in Pilate's time, were a subject or subjected nation, and, that they neither made, or administered, the laws of their own country, and were especially, in so many words in these laws, deprived of jurisdiction over capital offences, or those punishable with death, and hence, if Christ was convicted of the crime of sedition, which he was not as these gospels all agree in the admission, he was not, this crime was not punishable with death if convicted, and to even permit of scourging, the penalty of sedition, if proved, and a sentence to that effect being given by the magistrate, which was not, on the contrary he was acquitted, and that always ends all criminal trials in every court under the heavens, in all times and this whole absurd story ought to close right here, for it is a gross insult to every man's intelligence, to try to convince him, that, an adequate power to protect an innocent victim of malice and hate, can so far forget its duty, as to permit such an unwarrantable farce to go further, or permit any appeal.

What did the Roman magistrate care how much Christ reviled the Jews, or their religion. The Romans were Pagans, and in religion, indifferent to either the Jews or to Christ, but were not indifferent to their position and duty, as magistrates over the province committed to their care as subordinates to the home authority, well knowing that their official life depended upon their fidelity to duty, and the good order secured over those they were sent to rule, and when we are called upon, or when the Christian bigot is called upon, to give his reasons why Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were fixed upon as the authors of these gospels, they all admit in their commentaries, in the prefaces to these four gospels, that no evidence can be found for these reasons, any bet-



ter than guess work, and there is still more obscurity, and uncertainty, as to the time when they were written, but no one of them is bold enough to intimate, that they were written in the first century; and if you take away the numerous miracles from these gospels, and reduce them from supernatural to natural, they are entirely worthless as proof or evidence, even if they agreed as to details, which they do not, but are in direct conflict on many important points, and this only serves to show, that an untruthful writer who only records what was at most only traditionary, and more frequently his own inventions, will be as untruthful about a natural event, as a supernatural one. If we look further along in the new testament for proof that Christ was ever crucified, there can be found nothing stronger, than that it is implied in some of the epistles, but not asserted, and these slight implications may be, and very likely are forgeries, to establish some theological point in the endless controversies that have always characterized the Christian church. This crucifixion theme will be discussed at greater length in another portion of this essay, but before leaving, or dismissing this important question for the time, it is considered proper to look a little more closely to the details of this transaction, and inquire whether the average reader knows clearly what tradition is, and what it is capable of doing in the course of the lapse of many years.

Tradition is unwritten, or verbal depository of sayings and doings, of some noted person, which fixes itself in the memory of the spectator or listener, and is by him passed along, with such additions and changes as memory permits, without any regard to accuracy, and is sure to accumulate more to itself, as every succeeding generation omits to record it, it finally gets a place in the record, of this individual, and thus becomes from that time history or recorded tradition, a very unreliable and untruthful way to transmit anything of importance. As a familiar example to illustrate this way of getting at the real facts by tradition, When George Washington was a boy, his father, to gratify him, bought a hatchet, and he, boy like, so hacked into a favorite cherry tree in a thoughtless way, as to nearly ruin it as a fruit tree, and on being questioned in regard to whose act this was said: "Father, I cannot tell a lie, I hacked the tree with my little hatchet." Nobody recorded this incident, but after Washington had secured fame, and died, this tradition found a place in his biography, and is now entirely discredited by his family, as never having occurred, but if many hundred years had intervened, before this tradition was stricken from the history in which it had secured a place, it would be held strictly true. Such is tradition, and such is the foundation on which Christianity is standing.

Of course, it is not to be expected that any Jewish writers would admit that Christ ever lived, and much less likely they would admit their ancestors ever crucified him, or ever wished to do so, but the Talmud is everywhere, among scholars, admitted to be good authority on Jewish laws, and that asserts that forty years before the destruction of the temple the judgment of capital crimes was taken away from Israel; and yet the gospels say, the Jews arrested him without permission, and tried, convicted, and sentenced him to death, in their own court, and they did this without consultation with, or authority from, the Roman magistrate, and they only brought him to Pilate, after they pronounced the death sentence, for him to ratify their action. These unlawful proceedings were all disallowed, and no notice or approval given to this illegal act, and very likely if any such proceedings were ever had, those who were the instigators, or perpetrators, were severely punished. But that does not, of course, appear in the account, and if it is admitted that Jewish law could try Jesus for the crime of sedition, all these proceedings were contrary to that law, for he could not have had more than a preliminary hearing, and the Jewish law expressly prohibits that, and they not only violated their own laws in that respect, but actually pronounced sentence of death, but dare not put it in force, without Pilate's permission.

Another violation of Jewish law was in trying a criminal in the night, which their own laws expressly forbid; such a trial must begin and end in the daytime; they may be concluded the same day, if acquitted, but not otherwise. But two of these gospels say the trial was begun and ended the same night, without any intermission. Another violation of Jewish law, for we are not now saying anything about Roman law, was, in holding a trial for a capital offence on the day before the Sabbath, or a feast day, and it is clearly apparent that this trial was not concluded, and sentence given, till Friday morning, the day before the Sabbath, and hence was illegal according to Jewish law. Another provision of Jewish law is, that a criminal could not be arrested, tried, condemned and executed, before two days had expired, and it is no answer to the above to say, that the Jews simply acted in an illegal arbitrary manner, for before a court composed of seventy-two members of the highest standing among their own people, would wholly disregard their own laws, when they could just as well have observed them. It is far more consistent to think that the whole story is a fiction, invented in after times, like miracles.

Another gross infraction of Jewish law, which forbids a question to be asked to the accused is recorded by the first gospel writer, whoever he was, who states the high priest not only asked him a question, but

urged him and adjured him by the living God, tell us, whether thou art the Christ or not, the son of the living God, and that when Jesus answered that he was, the high priest said "he hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses, behold ye have heard his blasphemy!" This was the high priest or presiding chief judge, of the council or court of seventy-two members, who acted in the capacity of a jury. It is also stated in the gospels that those who constituted the court, or jury as we now call the body who decide on the guilt or innocence of a criminal, that they went out of their way, or took extra pains or trouble to find witnesses, and these same gospels say these witnesses when found, were false witnesses, who swore to a lie. Or in another and plainer way of stating it, the judge made himself the prosecutor of the accused, and worked up the case against him, thus determining on his guilt and conviction in advance, and manufacturing, or hiring evidence in advance to accomplish it in that way, thus not only did they decide the case in advance of the trial, but suborning, or as we should say, subpœnœing witnesses to merely give it the appearance of legality. Such proceedings are unheard of, and totally incredible, for no judge in any court that was ever organized on earth, ever was corrupt enough to do so monstrous an injustice as that would be.

On the other hand, the judge who presides, invariably gives every criminal or accused person, a fair, just trial, and no one would accuse these seventy-two, highest in authority in a highly civilized nation, of being a pack of mere loafers, when to reach the position they occupied, as the supreme council of an old and proud nation, they must have been selected from the very best, and such a body of men never could have consented to such a one-sided trial, for no defense was even attempted. The prisoner or accused person, had no counsel or witnesses, and it must therefore be stated, that he was never arrested, or tried at all, and the whole story is nothing but an imaginary picture, clumsily drawn by an unskilled artist, in other words a mere lie; for there never was a nation enough advanced in civilization to have courts, for trying accused persons, that failed to guard with the most scrupulous care, every accused person, and permit him to make a defense, and assign him a lawyer to guard him from injustice, if he was too poor to himself procure one; and further, no court on earth, ever condemned a criminal or one accused of crime, after one side only was heard, for that would be ending the trial in the middle, or in fact no trial at all.

As another reason for doubting this whole story, the Jewish law did not permit the execution of a criminal for blasphemy, and hence the admission which the first gospel says was made in answer to the illegal question of the high priest, that he was the Christ, the son of God, was



not blasphemy, which was a technical term, and consisted in the mention in derision, or contempt, a sacred name, and the mishna, or as we call it, the code, states, that the blasphemer was not guilty until he pronounced that prohibited sacred name in a trifling or contemptuous manner, or what we call profane swearing; so that the claim which these false witnesses said he made, that he was the Messiah, even if it had been true that he made such a claim, the Pharisees who were his accusers and before whom he was arraigned for trial, considered any one making such a claim a mere fanatic, for they never expected a messiah, and hence it was a harmless or false claim about which they would never trouble any one, for it was only the few Sadducees among the Jews that ever looked for a messiah, or deliverer, and they were too few to have any importance, and instead of inquiring or of considering it a false claim, this gospel makes those Pharisees find him guilty, merely, because he made the claim which he never did, and they knew it before the trial, and it was not blasphemy, to claim as he was made to by the illegal question of the high priest in his answer, that he was the son of God.

Every son of Israel, was sometimes or under some circumstances given the right to call himself a son of God, and that technical term had too many meanings, to be termed in any case, criminal, therefore it is too incredible, to be worth while for any one to waste words trying to refute, that any set of sane men seventy-two in number, would have adopted so illegal a course to destroy an innocent man, when it would have been just as easy to have taken a strictly legal course. Besides this they never could have been permitted to act in a judicial capacity, without first applying for, and receiving the necessary permission from the Roman governor, without which, every such usurped authority would be in the nature of rebellion or treason, and would never have been ventured on by men as sagacious as these men who were the actors in this unheard of scene, for let it be again stated, the Jews were a subject, not an independent people.

So far we have only considered the Jewish side of this story; now let us see what part the Romans had in it, as related by these gospels. Before any proceedings, having for its ultimate or final object or design the destruction of an obnoxious person by the Jewish people or their ecclesiastical rulers, application for authority to begin and pursue this design would have to be made officially, to the Roman magistrate or governor of that province, and his written sanction or permission obtained, otherwise such acts as the gospels relate as having been done before the Roman magistrate was consulted at all, would have caused all concerned in these high-handed and illegal proceedings to be very

severely punished, as for aught we know they were, for usurping the authority they did not have, when they only had suspicion, that they would not get permission to proceed against an innocent person, or Roman citizen, who had the same right to protection as those had who were seeking his destruction, and besides, punishing those who usurped authority they did not have, would have nullified all their proceedings, including the conviction and sentence, and given the accused not only his liberty, but also have imposed a heavy fine on those who had brought this humiliation and disgrace on a Roman subject, without cause or right. It is very surprising that any writer should ever have dared to draw so clumsy and incredible or impossible a picture of an important transaction, as this whole fictitious story is, and it is if possible still more surprising, that it has never been discovered and disclosed till very lately, and the suspicion is deep and broad that the rascally priests and theologians have always known it to be nothing but an imposition, but no one would ever expect they would give it away, so that it had to be discovered and revealed by skepticism, or infidelity, and even that has been so feeble and timid, living among, and being connected in social and business relations with devout Christian people, who would be grieved to see one who on many accounts was estimable and worthy of esteem, that they have withheld giving expression, to what would inevitably cause his isolation socially, and his destruction if in business, and so no one till this present writer, so far as he is aware has ever as much as expressed a doubt, as to whether the Christ of the gospels was real, and his death as the gospels have delineated or attempted to prove them both to be mere fiction, and this proof comes from these gospels themselves, their own internal evidence is all that is required to be cited, and the contradictions and absurdities pointed out, to make out a case. The honest Christian believer, who has always been told that the new testament is the inspired word of God, and understands the declarations of the church with which he has been raised to manhood or maturity, which tell him that these gospels are the infallible truth, will, of course, not admit either the statements that no Christ such as the gospels describe ever lived, or the twin statement that he was never crucified, for either of these admissions destroys the whole fabric on which the church stands.

Those, however, who critically (or with such attention as so important a question requires) examine the evidence, without bias, or without any preconceived belief in the supernatural, and take the gospel and ecclesiastical explanations of them, with the same credence that they would such accounts as these if they were found in any other records similarly verified, if they critically examine, raise the question whether



the evidence of the existence of Christ or of his crucifixion is adequate to substantiate either proposition. Of course, the unbeliever who rejects all miracles as a natural impossibility, reject much besides which is connected with the miraculous. The same evidence is relied on to prove both, and if it is false as to miracles, it may also be false as to the natural events, connected with these miracles, for these are the details or parts of such miracles, and if the essential story is shown to be false, the details which are added to complete the story, and tend to make it seem credible, without the company of the miracle, are out of place, and also worthless.

Just look at the situation, here is a proud, powerful, rich, prosperous, and ancient nation, who, on this very account, and for this reason, become the object of desire, and the victim of the ambition of the conqueror, who led the Roman armies, and by force made the conquest of these people, reducing them to mere subjects, with no rights, but such as the conquerors choose to give them, which are always few and small at best. This subject people, find an obnoxious person in their midst, who they wish to destroy, for what reason does not at first appear, so the rulers of this subject people, or those who formerly were their rulers, but are so no longer, without as much as even making complaint to their actual rulers, of their desire to be rid of this offensive person, and without asking for a warrant, or authority to proceed against this person, proceed to make the arrest by mob violence, after bribing one of his companions to point him out to this mob, to prevent arresting the wrong person, and following them into this private garden, where they had taken refuge to avoid discovery. Judas fulfils his part of the bargain, made with the instigators and abettors of this mob, and gives them the promised signal. They seize him without the slightest show of authority, being strong enough to prevent a rescue, if any was attempted, bring him before a court already convened, in anticipation of the arrival of the mob with the prisoner they were to try, without having any jurisdiction or right to sit, bring him to immediate trial without allowing him any time to secure counsel, convict him without any evidence, give no chance for any defense, sentence him to death for no crime, for which, if it had been clearly proved, which it was not, was not punishable with death, and then without daring to carry out this sentence, without sanction, for the first time in this whole outrageous unlawful proceeding, apply to Pilate for leave to execute him. Is that the way a conquered, subject people, are permitted to manage such matters? By no means; just the reverse, for none of these impossible things were ever done, and any one who chooses, is at liberty to require more proof than the mere declaration of an unknown author, or several authors,

whose account of this transaction is so contradictory, that the precise way it was done, must be confined to the one who gives the most full and explicit details and is given by the writer of the fourth gospel, who is said to be John, but this is not certain.

This account represents, that, after Pilate had refused to let them execute their victim, because no case had been made out or proof of any crime, either against Jewish or Roman law, and said: "I find no fault in him," they then went to a higher authority, the Roman pro-consul, Herod, and preferred a new charge, that of treason or setting himself up as king of the Jews, thus he would be a rival or rebel against the Roman emperor, Cæsar Augustus, and after another one-sided trial, he also said, you have brought no proof; he is not guilty. And now is related the most glaringly incredible statement, that the history of the most infamous wretch that ever existed on earth can parallel.

John says that Pilate said, after Herod had found him innocent, and sent him back to him, "Take ye him and crucify him for I find no fault in him." Now, Pilate did not deliver Jesus up to the Jews for them to crucify him, because this same John says that the whole of the actual process of crucifying him, was done by the Romans. Pilate first scourged him, which was the legal penalty for the crime of sedition, if it had been proved, which it was not, as Pilate himself said, and therefore he was not scourged, or as we say whipped. The soldiers who were Romans made a crown of thorns and put it on his head, in mockery or derision; they also put on him a scarlet robe to imitate a bogus king in mockery. Pilate wrote the inscription, and put in on the cross; the soldiers crucified him, and reviled him, and cast lots to see who should have his garments, and a soldier thrust a spear through his heart, to be sure he was dead, and lastly, Pilate gave away his dead body, and this account contradicts itself, for it distinctly asserts, that Pilate gave him over to the Jews for them to crucify him, and then proceeds to relate his crucifixion wholly by the Romans. This is as near the case, as is possible to gather from so contradictory an account as is everywhere found showing it to be mere guess work or invention.

Cicero, a few years before, as the gospels assert Pilate put to death Jesus, an innocent man, on the cross, spoke these words to the Roman senate, when an inferior magistrate, named Verres, had put to death on a cross, a Roman citizen, innocent, named Publius Gavus Cosanus, while these words, "I am a Roman citizen" was on his lips; words, which in the remotest regions, are a passport to protection; you ordered him to death, to death on a cross: "Is it come to this? Shall an inferior magistrate, a governor who holds his whole power by leave of the Roman people, in a Roman province, scourge, bind, torture, and put

to an infamous death, an innocent Roman Citizen? It must not be permitted!"

Now, it is plain Roman law, that no crime charged against Jesus, was punishable with death, supposing it had been proved, for "Neander," the great church historian says, in his life of Christ, section two hundred and eighty-four: "No accusation of heresy, blasphemy, or false assumption of a prophetic or divine character, is a capital offence, even, according to the Jews' religion; and yet, these gospels represent him, as having been handed over by Pilate, to the Jews, to be crucified under their law, for a trifling offence, and which as we have seen is not punishable with death, even if it had been proved, even under Jewish law." Again, the execution of the death penalty was in no case by crucifixion, except the convicted criminal was a slave, or guilty, and so proved, of the very lowest and desperate crimes. No Roman citizen, or subject, could be crucified, and hence no such an illegal or unprecedented case as this, would, or even could have been had, for no Roman magistrate, would dare violate Roman laws to such an extent, merely to gratify a spirit of revenge or malice, of some of their subjects.

Now let us see how improbable it is that the Jews of that day, and in that subject condition, would dare violate their own laws, even if they were permitted to have that authority granted them, by the Romans, which they were clearly not, and there is nowhere to be found in these gospels, any intimation they ever had. Neither Jesus, or any other man could even be put to death in any manner for the offence charged against him, for only scourging was the penalty, and that even was for only those who were clearly guilty, and were so proved, and had a sentence to that penalty, after a fair trial and conviction.

Crucifixion was never a Jewish mode of inflicting the death sentence, and it was absolutely unknown at that time, and always has been among the Jews, for their modes of executing criminals who were sentenced to death were four only: Stoning, burning, beheading, and strangling. This last was rarely used, and when it was used, the victim was seized by two men by the throat, and, after being strangled till dead, in a very aggravated case of crime, he was tied to a stake, or tree, and left to be devoured by beasts. Furthermore, the scarlet robe, the crown of thorns, and other of physical indignities, such as beating, spitting upon, and mocking insults, and references such as are in the gospels described, were impossible; for the Romans always protected their prisoners, and convicted criminals, from injury or insult, after conviction as well as before, and at the trial, and would never allow any such insult, for they had the sole management of this execution, as John's gospel fully describes it to have occurred; and there is still



another detail, more improbable than any other so far found. Roman law always obliged the victim to carry his own cross and John says Jesus went out carrying his own cross, but the other three gospels contradict this, or this contradicts theirs, for they assert that Simon, a Cyrenian, was compelled to carry the cross. Who was Simon? He was a chance spectator, who just happened to be there from curiosity, and had no connection whatever with this case, or this criminal, and therefore to compel an innocent man, without any process or authority, to submit to such an indignity, was not only illegal, but an outrage, the Romans would never have allowed, and that is simply another lie told by three, and the fourth refused to confirm it but contradicted it.

Another huge lie says, that the inscription that Pilate wrote and put upon the cross, was, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," and such an inscription would give no intimation of his crime, for which the crucified one was made thus to suffer, when Roman law obliged those who superintended executions to put on the cross an inscription, the crime for which this was the penalty and only that; hence no insulting words would be permitted. Another improbable circumstance, that seriously vitiates this account is, that some unknown stranger, who has not thus far been heard of in this proceeding, or any where else in these gospels, named Joseph, of Arimathea, also an unheard of place, never again mentioned in the gospels, comes to Pilate, and begs the body of Jesus, when he knew, that Pilate had no more right to dispose of that body, than he, Joseph, had to steal it, and he knew he could never steal it, for a strong guard of soldiers was always placed about a crucified criminal, who nearly always lived from three to six days, to prevent such as would, or might otherwise release them, and restore them again to health, if not dead, and when dead they were left to slow decomposition, and it must be explained here, that no criminal that was ever crucified under Roman law, was ever spiked to a cross through the hands and feet, they were lashed with cords in a secure manner, which was minutely described in the sentence, so that this manner of nailing victims to a cross, was first invented and put in practice, when the Christian fanatic persecuted and put to death heretics, after other modes of the most diabolical torture had failed to cause the victim accused of heresy, or a difference of theological opinion, to recant, when thousands on thousands, of as good and virtuous men and women as ever lived, have been, by these holy devils, both tortured and crucified, by nailing to the cross, for a mere difference of opinion, honestly entertained, and firmly held, and boldly asserted and for which they chose rather to die, than abandon, and to which they had the same right, as those who persecuted them had to theirs, but they



were in a minority, consequently, not physically able to defend themselves, against this vile nest of Christian bigots, some of whom were Popes, others cardinals, bishops, and lower grades of clergy, and even Christian emperors, for it is a notorious fact so certified to by all history, and not denied by the Roman Catholics, that the most outrageous crimes, such as would disgrace the lowest savages that ever existed, have been perpetrated by not only the sanction, but by the express orders of the highest ecclesiastical authority in the Christian church, through the entire period when it was able, unopposed, to act out its devilish purpose, to produce absolute obedience to its orders, and absolute uniformity of the belief of its adherents, to such doctrines and requirements as the hierarchy might, from time to time prescribe, and a similarity in this respect is to be found in the Protestant wing of Christians. Their highest authority if they could prevent it, would not allow any other person, to either doubt their honesty or their sincerity, or to entertain a different view than their own, but if able would compel every person to receive and hold his or their views, with uniformity, and tenacity, and they would forcibly exterminate the whole human race, that persisted in refusing to adopt his or their views, with the satisfying conviction, that their system was the only one fit to survive, when at the same time they are totally unable to either prove its authority, its origin, or its superiority, the whole in both cases, Catholic and Protestant, being nothing but a dream of superstitious fanaticism, not worth one minute's thought.

Another weak point connected with this fictitious tragedy of the crucifixion of Christ is, that no place ever has been found, or ever will be, by travelers about the city of Jerusalem, to correspond to Mount Calvary, where this scene was said to have occurred, after the most diligent search, or to the garden of Gethsemane, where the arrest took place after this victim had suffered such terrific uncontrollable fear, that he did or was said to have done, what no other human being ever did or can ever do, for, it in its nature is impossible and that was to sweat great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. Why was all this fear realized in his case more than in others who have been executed in this barbarous manner, for the account says this result had been long foreseen, and anticipated, and therefore was no sudden surprise, and a mental preparation for fortitude to endure such an emergency was made several days previous, and the reality was not worse than was expected, and was both necessary and unavoidable, or a resurrection from the dead would not have been possible, and hence salvation, as it had been planned by the impostors who invented this scheme, would not be complete.

Another improbable circumstance in this transaction is, that Jesus, when he was on the cross, and in such agony as any victim in such a situation always is, that he should decline to drink the anodyne, which is given invariably under Roman law to all crucified victims, to deaden their sensibility, and prevent their outcries caused by the agony they inevitably always endure, and also to relieve the intense thirst, which is always experienced in this situation. This anodyne, was composed of an acid wine, in which myrrh was mixed in the right proportion to both relieve thirst, and to quiet pain, and was given as an act of mercy or pity, and not for an intended insult, as the gospel would have us believe, when Matthew says they offered him vinegar, mingled with gall, of which he merely tasted, but refused to drink, and all the other gospels say that it was simply vinegar that was offered him, and he drank it, and immediately died, or gave up the ghost, which is the same thing.

So far from it being the intention or wish of the Romans, who conducted this execution, to intensify the sufferings of the victims who were so unfortunate as to come to this intense suffering, a lingering one lasting several days, they provided these simple means to mitigate somewhat the suffering, and as Jesus is represented to have asked for a draught to quench his thirst, and this misrepresentation of the gospel writer says they gave him only vinegar, and that had the effect to immediately kill him when, he had only been on the cross about six hours, there must be a mistake some where, for, Pilate wondered if he was already dead, when Joseph of Arimathea came to beg his body, as much as four hours later, and found him still alive and killed him by thrusting a spear through his heart. Now, none of these gross insults which these gospels assert the Roman soldiers were said to have been made, such as the crown of thorns, the scarlet robe, the smiting with a reed, the spitting upon, or this reviling, bidding him to come down from the cross, would either have been as much as desired by the Romans, much less allowed for they were only indifferent actors in this drama by appointment, not from choice, and in whose behalf this victim made the last prayer he ever made, when he is reported to have asked his father to forgive them, because they knew not what they were doing, or in other words, they were obliged by their calling as soldiers, to do the bidding of their superiors; and he would never have done this, if they had exceeded their imperative duty, by heaping these gross insults upon him.

Another objection of much importance is the statement, that he was after all this seen alive by many persons, at various times. St. Paul says he was first seen by Cephas, then of the twelve, afterwards by more than five hundred brethren at once, and last of all he was seen of

“me also, as of one born out of due time,” referring to the time when he was struck blind, and unable for many days to see even his own food, but still he then saw the newly crucified and risen Christ, who up to that time he bitterly hated to as much as hear his name repeated. The unbeliever, of course, rejects the whole story, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the body of anything dead; in consequence he says, that Christ, if he ever lived at all, which he disputes, concludes, he at any rate was never crucified, and these are the only sensible conclusions and disposes of the whole controversy, about which no amount of controversy will ever be able to shed the first ray of light, and finally in view of all the difficulties named so far in the examination of this question, historical, legal, and physical, the question becomes a serious one to the honest, sincere Christian, but only an indifferent one to the skeptic, whether Jesus was actually really crucified, not a question of details merely, but the reality of the main fact, for it is the essentials or main facts after all that are the most doubtful.

It has seemed to me ever since I abandoned the hopes and fears I once had with reference to the alleged truths and declarations not only of scripture, but of the Christian ministers of all orthodox sects, that they ought to be called upon to prove some of their declarations as well as those of the scriptures upon which they found these assumptions. Having personally had for fifty years all the Christian experience which is required to constitute a genuine church member, and having actually belonged to one of the most intensely orthodox churches in existence for thirty years, and partaken of the communion regularly all that time, unless prevented by unavoidable reasons, I consider I am more entitled to require the Christian ministers to give some satisfactory reason why any such a system as the Christian has any right to exist at all. Accordingly I deemed it a duty to address several able ministers, letters which had for their object, to, if possible, extract from them some, as much as probable, reason why Christianity ought not to be regarded as a fraud and an imposition on the human race. I have therefore concluded to record for future use to all such as shall be curious enough to care to read the same, the somewhat extended correspondence held by me with the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rochester, N. Y., which is a sample of several others which was had with other able ministers, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Congregational, Jewish, etc.

My first letter to this pastor was dated October 16th, 1892, and is in these words: A preacher of the gospel is in one sense a public man. The undersigned heard you preach this morning for the first time, (having gone into the church more to hear the music than the sermon),



from the following text of scripture found in First Corinthians, second chapter, second verse, as follows: "For I determined not to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified." Your earnestness and your apparent sincerity excited my admiration, and your ability as a preacher is cheerfully conceded, but your subject "Christ and him crucified," requires in my judgment more proof than mere assumption which was all you offered to give that he was ever crucified at all or even that such a being ever existed, and it also requires more proof than can be found in the four gospels that any such Christ as they describe, even ever lived on this earth at all for on both of these subjects there is in these gospels so much obscurity and contradiction that no intelligent or reasonable conclusion can be found. You, like all ministers, must take many such things for granted and seek for no proof when we honest but ignorant laymen require proof stronger than mere assertion or assumption. I would like to have you correspond with me, if it suits your views of propriety, and in that way try and convince me by proof which would be admissible in any court or before any intelligent jury that, "first," Jesus Christ ever lived at any time, and "second," if he ever lived, that he was ever crucified. These are plain questions so no mistake is possible as to their meaning. I never allow myself to disturb the simple-minded, honest Christian lay believer with any question of this kind that might create doubt and anxiety but you ministers ought not to be averse or unwilling to either give or receive light on so important a question even from a layman, and while I may not fully reveal to you, at this time, my identity, I will state to you, I am an aged man, near 76, and am not a Jew nor a Unitarian, but have been a church member in St. Peter's Presbyterian Church, in Rochester, thirty or more years, and my present address is Ridgeland, Monroe County, N. Y. I am, of course, aware that it is somewhat impertinent for an entire stranger to thus thrust himself upon your notice, but you must not feel obliged to as much as answer this letter unless your sense of propriety causes you to be willing to do so.

Yours very respectfully,

C. M. L.

The following answer was received, dated Rochester, N. Y., October 18, 1892:

Mr. L. M. C., Dear Sir: I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of Sunday last. I appreciate your kind remarks about my "earnestness and apparent sincerity." If I know myself at all, I am sincere when I preached Jesus Christ, as the one Saviour and Lord, the Light and Hope of human souls. It does not seem to me, however, that



much profit could result from a correspondence between us, unless we first knew each other a little better. I doubt not that you are often in the city, could you not do me the kindness to call upon me or notify me when and where I might call upon you? I am at home every day between 12 and 2 o'clock. It would be a real pleasure for me to meet with you and to tell you why I believe in Christ as I do. One thing is certain, my belief fills me with hope, and good cheer, and undying inspiration both as regards this world and the world to which we are both journeying. Hoping to hear from you again, I am very truly yours.

He did hear from me again in the following letter, dated October 20th, 1892:

Rev. and Dear Sir: I was both agreeably surprised and profoundly thankful on the receipt of your polite and interesting letter of the 18th instant, which came to me the same evening. I did not mean to leave the impression with you that I desired or expected an extended correspondence with you, unless it should in some sense become necessary to enlighten both of us on these, not only to us but also to all men important questions, the advent and the crucifixion of Christ; and I concede the reasonable requirement you suggest, that we both ought to know each other better before entering on such a controversy or correspondence as would very likely develope. I would be glad to meet you at your home, but I fear it will be impossible. I thank you, however, for the invitation, and I will reciprocate by inviting you to visit me at my humble home which is situated in the town of Brighton. I very seldom visit the city, and never go unless some urgent business obliges me to go, and then I only stay as long as is necessary to transact that business. I can, however, see no good result or purpose in a personal interview, for I have had many such with able ministers, and have not so far found one that can remove my difficulties, and it was a mere accident that awakened my hope from the general drift and tenor of the theme you so earnestly and ably handled last Sunday morning, that you could, and would refer me to some historical proof other than the new testament, that any Jesus Christ, such as is there delineated or described, ever lived. As we may never become acquainted personally with each other, I will endeavor to plainly describe to you who, and what I am, and I have described where I can be found.

I have already told you I am an old man, I will add that I am a Massachusetts Yankee, born and reared to maturity in the town of Lenox, Berkshire County. I have lived in Monroe County fifty-three years. I made a public profession of religion, or in other words was converted or regener-

ated, over fifty-one years ago, after a thorough religious training, by both parents and by the Sunday-school from early childhood. I united with St. Peter's church on profession of faith in Christ, thirty-two years since, and for more than thirty years was an active and consistent member thereof, and in every way was a consistent Christian believer, if I have a true conception of what that is, but on account of changes in my convictions respecting the genuine nature of the claims of the Christian religion, which would require more space than would be proper to use in a letter to you, to describe, but was described to the pastor of the church to which I belonged, in a letter to him, I felt it my duty to ask him to cause my name to be erased from the roll of membership about two years since, saying to him that he could see as well as I could that it would be inconsistent with both of us to longer continue this relation.

Rev. Alfred J. Hutton in a long letter to me afterwards informed me that my wish had been unanimously but reluctantly complied with by the session, at a regular meeting, and I have ever since been free, and I am still endeavoring to satisfy myself, by inquiring of intelligent Christian ministers, of all orthodox sects and Rev. W. C. Gannett, who, although a Unitarian, and therefore will not be considered by such as you any authority on such a question, will be acknowledged an able scholar and an honorable gentleman by all ministers. Rev. Max Landsberg, who although a Jew, is conceded by all Christians a very learned and liberal minded gentleman, and none of these or even the notorious Howard McQueary, can refer me to one item of historical proof which is any better than a guess that the Christ of the new testament was more than a fiction, or his religion any more real than an imaginary deception, or a farce and a fraud. I therefore thought that as you stand in such an intimate relation, as the pastor of such men as Dr. Strong, President of the Theological Seminary; Dr. Osgood and Dr. Kendrick, two learned professors of distinction, you all combined could refer me to some proofs on this point that would be convincing. I hope that my doubts and my inquiries will not disturb you so as to diminish your hope and good cheer in prospect of what is to be your destiny after the short journey of life is over, but you have yet many years to cling to this anchor of hope before you will have held it as long and as strongly as I did, and I assure you that I feel, after letting go my hold, more secure than ever I had felt while I had a firm grip that seemed likely to last as long as life itself. If I have not now introduced myself to your notice, so as to give you a desire to comply with my request you, of course, will refuse to notice me any further, but let me assure you, I am sincere in my wish for this information respecting the reality of the foundation on which the

Christian church is built, and you ministers can have no more urgent duty to perform than to remove such difficulties as this when they are in this direct manner brought to your notice about (to yourself as well as me and all men) a vital question, otherwise the impression will abide and grow stronger, that you cannot do it. This is to all Christian ministers as well as their dupes a question more important in its nature and results than any or all others, and as far as I know, has never been raised in this form by anyone not a Jew, and lest the Jews may be shown to be right in rejecting Christ and his religion, Christians must not only assert, but prove and defend this position before the world, or the Christian system will perish for want of ability and energy to defend and maintain it on the part of its great and most able ministers.

Very truly yours,

L. M. C.

November 1, 1892.

Mr. L. M. C., My Dear Sir: Your interesting letter of October 19th was duly received, and I thank you for confiding to me what it contains of your personal history. I do not assume that I am capable of instructing one of your years and experience yet I trust that I may sometime find the opportunity of meeting you. If not able to help one another, I can at least give a reason for the hope that is in me. As to Jesus Christ's historical reality and His place in the world's history, perhaps no question has received more of scholarly attention. Of course you know that points like the following are established if anything in history is established. 1. The existence of a remarkable personage known as Jesus Christ. 2. That He had a large number of followers devotedly attached to Him and His teachings. 3. That He taught in Judea. 4. That He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. 5. That the number of His followers increased greatly after His death. 6. That His followers worshipped Him as God. 7. That they were distinguished by the purity of their lives. It is also evident that to-day the name of Christ is the most potent force in this world, and that His religion is the religion of the progressive nations of the world. Now, as to Christ's supernatural character, this is a large and weighty question. Of course there are books without number relating to it and discussing it in every conceivable way. To name only one, "Nature, and the Supernatural," by Horace Bushnell, is a book of much value and suggestiveness. Probably you are already acquainted with it. For myself nothing is more convincing to me than the picture presented of Christ in the four gospels. Christ is His own witness. His character, His teachings, tell their own story of the divine nature of Him whose they are. Hoping that I may hear from you again, I am, dear sir, very truly yours.

November 29, 1892.

My Dear Sir: Any gentleman, whether he is a minister of the gospel or not, is obliged, as well by the law of etiquette as by that of good breeding, to as much as acknowledge the receipt of a letter that he had invited his correspondent to write and inform him if such was the fact that he desired no further correspondence with him. I have now waited about four weeks to get your response to my letter of the 4th instant, with the impression that perhaps you needed time to investigate and consult authorities in history, so as to be able to definitely answer my two questions which I am sure are too direct and to the point to be either overlooked or misunderstood by any person of average intelligence, but I am obliged to infer from your long silence that either you cannot or will not gratify my expressed wish. I cheerfully concede that your many duties in connection with your office as pastor of a large church gives you little time to devote to one, who like me, has no claim whatever to your further notice, and all my object in this communication is to learn your conclusion, as to any further acquaintance or correspondence with me, being wished for or not. I think, however, both of us could be profited by some further discussion of so important a subject, especially to all ministers as the foundation or the founder of Christianity being real instead of fictitious or imaginary. I am sure it has never occurred to you that any person, not a Jew, ever had a doubt about the reality of the advent of Christ, and so you have never sought for any other evidence than such as the four gospels furnish. Hoping to soon hear from you, I am very sincerely any truly yours,

L. M. C.

The letter to which I was awaiting an answer is here inserted, dated November 4th, 1892.

My Dear Sir: I am extremely gratified that you consider me of so much importance as to wish a further acquaintance with me, or at least you have in your last, expressed a wish to hear from me again. I feel that I am not competent to instruct you, notwithstanding my riper age, and in some respects a more extensive experience. I am, however, sorry to see in you, as I have seen in every minister with whom I have corresponded, a disposition to evade, or pretend not to understand the real question about which my inquiry demanded a categorical or satisfactory answer. I did not ask you, nor am I anxious to have you reveal to me the reason why you have the hope that is satisfactory to yourself, unless you can found such hope on more than a fictitious or imaginary character and demonstrate to me that the Christ described in the gospels is genuine or real, and the teachings ascribed to him in these



gospels anything better than copies of other more ancient philosophers, and moralists from whom all these teachings of any real value was derived.

You are aware as well as I am that the divine inspiration of the Bible is called in question by as able theologians and scholars as the world has ever produced, and that others of like ability have found it to be necessary to defend it, and of course an undecided question, such as this admits of doubt and requires proof to dispel such doubt, but I have neither the ability or disposition to discuss that question, but I have arrived at what is satisfactory to my own mind, to the conclusion, that all so called holy or sacred writings are so only as far as false instruction has made them appear so, and that this false instruction pertains alike to all forms of religious belief, and to none is its effect more deplorable than in the form both you and I have been instructed and trained up in. Christianity, therefore, to be enduring, must not be a deception or even an imposition. Before we can rely on the truth of any history and in particular ancient history we must know what facilities the historian had, and what were his abilities to discover and to record what is important to substantiate any important fact related in such history, and besides contemporaneous historians must confirm and not contradict each other. It is to me evident that not one sentence that is reliable, can be found in ancient history, or since this era, which is called the Christian era, that any remarkable man lived in Judea, in the period when Pilate and Herod were there as Roman magistrates.

The history or record containing the details of their administration of the affairs entrusted to them are abundant in Rome to-day, and there is nowhere in such records the most distant allusion to any of the scenes of the birth, life, teachings, or death of such a remarkable person as the gospels describe Jesus Christ of Nazareth to have been, or that either Christ or the two thieves were ever heard of as being accused or tried before them, or of their crucifixion. These are the disclosures of the gospels alone, and are nowhere else to be found, and the prefaces in every commentary I have ever consulted of all the new testament books can give nothing better than a guess, either who wrote these several fragments or when or where they were written, so that we are left entirely in the dark as to whether any of the scenes recorded in the acts of the apostles ever occurred, consequently we only know that a fanatical set of men, both Jews and pagans, contrived a new form of religion, and invented a foundation on which to construct the fabric, that after many trials, vicissitudes and partial failures, by much perserverance, finally developed into Christianity, but that they were ever remarkable for the purity of their lives. I have never heard, unless you refer to indi-

viduals and that is the case everywhere, without the slightest reference to religion of any description or the want of it, and that the early Christians were instructed from their infancy, just as both you and I were to consider Christ, God, may easily be imagined, but that in either case proves nothing, neither does it prove the Christian religion genuine or superior to others, merely because it is so widely disseminated for the name of that vile impostor as both you and I know him to be. Mahomet has completely obliterated all but the mere name of Christ from the source where it originated, and now holds the holy land in the most slavish subjection, and rules more than ten times as many of the human race as can be counted as even nominal Christians, for of what consequence are such Christians in name only, as both the Greek and Roman Catholics? They are no better than pagans or Mahometans, or even Mormons. Of course, I speak of them not as individuals, but as a whole, and where and when Christianity has followed commerce into regions inaccessible before commerce opened the way, and thus afforded protection to the missionaries, the results are so infinitesimal as not to be worth estimating, because the vices which are by such agencies as commerce and the intercourse with Christian nations are sure to follow the missionaries more than neutralize any favorable impression the expensive missionary enterprise can make.

You rightly characterize the supernatural about Christ as a weighty question. From your standpoint it may be, but from mine there is no question whatever about it, for I am persuaded and indeed I know, that if Christ was ever introduced into this world at all, which is yet to be demonstrated, it was by or through the same process as every other living animal of whatever species has been and that story related in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, of miraculous or supernatural intervention must be soon abandoned, because it is too revolting to the universal experience of intelligent beings in this age of light and knowledge, to be any longer tolerated as McQueary has clearly, rightly and fully demonstrated, and so have many others, and all the books that have ever been written to try to establish the supernatural, including Bushnell's, which you mention with seeming approval, leave the question more undecided and mysterious than they found it.

What is super-nature? If a reality it is superior or antecedent to nature, which is an impossibility not worth a moment's effort to discuss, for when a finite mind endeavors to penetrate into regions beyond nature, the most highly educated and the most gifted minds are immediately lost and then they instinctively, or by reason of false instruction resort to that humbug called faith, to by that means extricate their

feeble reason from hopeless despair and ruin, for faith can only seize and apply what the reasoning faculty of man rejects, or in other words, what is beyond the scope of reason. I have no right, or even wish to disturb your convincing confidence in the reality of the Christ of the gospels, for that would deprive you not only of the hope you now seem to have of a blessed immortality, but also deprive you of the means of earning a living unless you are ready, like most other ministers, situated as you are, to adopt the role of hypocrite, and continue to preach what you no longer believe, which I am sure you are not, or never will stoop to so unworthy a device.

Permit me to say in this place, what I should have said before, that it is a question of no importance whether such men as Socrates, Plato, or Julius Cæsar ever lived or not, to either me or any one else, but when history is full of irresistible evidence thoroughly confirmed that they actually lived, and also abounds in unimportant details descriptive of their lives, characters and teachings, and omits entirely to notice the only, to the Christian, really important character that has ever lived on earth, and thus leaves such an important event to be announced in an impossible contradictory manner, by some obscure, unknown individuals, of whose identity there is no evidence, nor of their ability or honesty, the suspicion of imposition, fraud and deception is justifiable, and a searching inquiry is urgently demanded of those, like you, who hold the affirmative side of the question, to clear away the doubts that may arise, and this reasonable requirement should be most cheerfully responded to by them when the question is thus brought to their notice. I do not say this cannot be done, but such as I who have these honest doubts have no resource, but to call upon such able theologians as yourself and such associates of yours, as I have named, to give an answer to these reasonable questions.

And now a closing word is necessary in regard to the character of Christ and his teachings. Neither you, or John Stuart Mill, which you quote with so much seeming satisfaction, are any better able to judge of that than I am, for what any one can know about those subjects all rests on the disclosures of the gospels, and if the supernatural element and the miraculous is eliminated which has no right there, because it is false; and notice that the teachings, such as allegories and parables are repeated by the three first gospels, and in some cases by all four, so varied, that they seem other than repetitions, and that they are not original with Christ, but were discovered and promulgated by several previous moralists, it reduces not the value of the moral precepts, but the claim of original discovery, and makes the writers, who record them, as the teachings of Christ, open to the charge of willful forgery and deception.

Now, as to his personal character, but little is revealed of the other side, while his eulogists have made the favorable side appear prominent, and while it may be, and is conceded that nothing criminal was really disclosed at his trial, such general personal enmity and hate as is there made prominent must have had some more serious cause than mere rivalry or fear that he was about to usurp the temporal power belonging to the Romans, who ruled Judea at that time. I will refrain from more remarks at this time, lest I occupy too much of your valuable time. Hoping that you will not be offended or disturbed by what I have written, and that you will write me another of your beautiful, comprehensive letters, I remain very sincerely and truly your friend,

L. M. C.

While my letter of the 29th, inquiring the reason why the above letter had not been answered was in transit, and before it was received, Mr. — had mailed the answer to me, which I had been expecting, so he immediately sent an explanation as follows:

Rochester, November 29, 1892, 2:15 P. M.

My Dear Sir: At noon to-day (and your letter came to me at 2 o'clock), I mailed a letter to you, when I returned home after a week's absence. Pressure of work prevented me from writing to you at once. If my letter sent to-day seems to have a good deal of the personal element in it, this is explained by your own letter to me of the 4th instant. If you write to me again may I ask that you put in definite form exactly what your questions are. I will then tell you what answer I make to them. So far you have suggested questions, but you have not stated them definitely, nor have you told the exact attitude of your own mind towards them.

Very truly yours,

P. S. As you suppose, I am a very busy man, and it is seldom that I write such long letters as I have to you.

November 30th, 1892.

Dear Sir: I have both of your letters of the 29th instant, and doubtless you have mine of the same date. You have been candid and plain, which is pleasing to me, but I cannot see how you could have failed to understand my questions, for they are definite and exact, but as you did not invite me to respond I am in some doubt, whether it will be proper for me to answer at length, some of your erroneous statements and conclusions, and shall await your permission or wish for me to do so, which you can indicate by postal card or otherwise, as soon as you receive this, in the meantime I am truly and sincerely yours,

L. M. C.



November 9, 1892.

Dear Sir: Absence from the city for a week has delayed my reply to yours of the 4th instant. I do not quite understand you. Do you question whether such a person as Jesus ever lived or existed? It has not occurred to me to discuss that question because it is one so completely settled. Do not all the unbelievers who wrote about Him, Renan, Strauss and all of them start out on the basis that such a person as Jesus Christ lived? Certainly they do. They differ from Christians as to what they think about Jesus, but they never call in question the fact of His life on the earth. This being the case, why should I spend time in proving that he lived? It would be like expending time to prove that the earth revolves on its axis, or proving any other fact which is universally accepted by the intelligence of our day. No! I do not evade the question, I simply cannot think that to you or any other intelligent man it is a question. When I said that Christ is his own witness, I had in mind what John Stuart Mill said, of course you know he was an unbeliever. He said that the character of Christ given in the four gospels is genuine, that is to say that such a man lived, and had such a character, because no one lived at that time capable of depicting such a character unless that character was real.

Where do you expect to find accounts of Jesus? Were the Jews, who killed him, likely to say much about him? Yet Josephus, their historian, does tell of Him. Were the Romans likely to concern themselves about one who was put to death as a malefactor in a distant province of the empire? But very soon after Jesus' time, you find disciples of His everywhere in the empire, and then references to these Christian disciples are found in Roman writings.

To refer to only one of these, the Roman historian, "Tacitus" in giving an account of the burning of Rome, in the time of Nero, speaks of the Christians (which he calls a pernicious superstition), had spread and how the Christians were persecuted. He testifies, therefore, to the death of Christ, to the spread of his religion, to the fact that within 34 years of Christ's death many Christians were found in Rome. Where did all these Christians come from, so early as the first century, if there was no one called Jesus Christ? I need not mention other Roman writings which refer to the Christians, such as the letter of Pliny. As to the testimony which you speak of concerning other influential men there is another side to it. Take Homer, for example, one of the few greatest poets. Nothing is known about him but there are his poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, which are the witnesses of his life and his power. Then take Socrates, we know a great deal about him. From what sources? From his disciples, Plato and Xenophon, yet the

accounts of one differ very much from the other. There were no authentic accounts of the last half of the life of Socrates, and Plato and Xenophon are almost our only real authorities of his life and opinions. But does any one doubt that Socrates lived, and was the most influential character of his time? And as to Shakespeare, is it not one of the remarkable facts that comparatively so little is known of the actual details of his life? Now, whom would you expect to preserve accounts of Jesus, if not his disciples, and this they did. When you talk about the obscurity or inability of those disciples, I have simply to remind you that they were able to establish the Christian church, so firmly that it stands yet. It is very odd that all the opposers of Christianity, from Celsus down, have not been able to uproot what those obscure men planted. When you cast suspicion upon the honesty of those disciples I suppose you hardly mean what you say, because this is another point long since conceded by unbelievers, "namely," that whatever else those disciples were, they were honest. They may have been mistaken, but they were incapable of wilful imposition. May I say that you have read your New Testament to very little purpose or advantage if you still suspect the writers of it of fraud?

As to your membership in a church for thirty years, your letter gives evidence that however honest you may have supposed yourself to be in making the Christian profession, you never knew Christ, as the very life of your soul, your profession was an unreal one; you professed what you did not possess. If you will read Acts 26-29, you will see how a man talks who for twenty-five years has had within him the divine life which Christ imparts. You speak of your age. My father is an older man than you. For fifty years he has served Christ. He has been a blessing to thousands of people, both as regards their temporal and spiritual welfare. To-day he is loved and honored by the people of several counties in Ontario. His heart is as cheery and hopeful as a boy's. His character is unselfish, pure, Christlike. One of these days he will leave this world as happy as a man leaves his work at 6 o'clock to go home. Can you give a better showing than my old father? How many lives have you blessed? How many human hearts have you cheered? How many hundreds love and honor you to-day? How cheerful will you be when you die?

As to your remarks about missionaries I could say much, for I happen to know a large number of them, and what they are doing, and I have not taken my information second-hand from men who have no sympathy with them and their work. You suggest that it is possible for me to continue preaching when I no longer believe, though you hardly think I will. Well, I do not think I will, but do not judge all professed

Christians by your own unhappy experience. You professed to be a Christian for thirty years, and then found out that your profession was all a delusion. Now, there are some whose profession is not a delusion, and I think that I am one of them. But depend upon it, the day I cease to believe in Christ as the world's Savior, that day I shall cease preaching. I think if I am put to it I could earn my bread and butter some other way. My dear friend, your letter reveals a discontented state of mind. It reveals a feeling of spite against Christ, against His apostles, against Christian missionaries, against Christianity. You are not at peace in your own mind, you are not at peace with God. That very Christ about whom you so write, is the source of peace and hope and redemption.

Now I have written plainly, also just as you did. I was not annoyed by your letter, I hope you will not be by mine. I have not said a tenth of what I had to say. I have acquainted myself with all the objections to Christianity from the day of Celsus in the second century, down to this year, 1892, and I still believe in Christ as my Redeemer and my Divine Master.

Sincerely yours,

P. S. As it regards the conflict between faith and unbelief to-day, it stands thus: 1st. All concede that Jesus lived. 2nd. All concede that the disciples of Jesus were honest men. 3rd. The problem of unbelief is on this basis. To explain the belief in supernatural Christianity, the existence of the New Testament, the origin of the Christian Church.

December 3, 1892.

My Dear Sir. There has been an unfortunate confusion in the regular order of our correspondence that requires correction, so I will resume the regular order and answer first yours of the 29th, sent first, and close with the one that came to me later. I feel guilty, but not intentionally of causing you to write so long a letter under a partial misapprehension of what questions precisely I required you to answer. On looking over a rough draft of my last, I perceived there seems to be some ambiguity or failure to put the questions about which I desired information, or an answer into a distinct proper form and consequently what you have written with such light as you could get from my somewhat indefinite language, fails entirely to touch the real merits of this subject, and I apologize for causing you to waste so much of your valuable time to no good purpose. You will agree with me when I assert that no subject about which no doubt is admissible is of equal importance to the one concerning the destiny of universal humanity at the close of its earthly career. The Christian religion more than any other professes to disclose and settle that question by or through the atoning sacrifice of a mediator, or savior, which mediator is Jesus

Christ of Nazareth. The necessity for this atonement or salvation was to restore the universal fallen nature of the human race by reason of its transmitted defilement by or through the sin of Adam. Without attempting to elaborate further the plan of salvation, which you understand, perhaps better than I do, it must be assumed, for it could never be proved that a savior was required adequate to an assumed emergency; hence a mere man would not be sufficient. This also is an assumption, and, therefore, it was assumed by the authors of this imposition, that a supernatural being, or one part God and one part man was required adequate to meet the emergency only assumed, mind you. Hence, if it can, by the intricate process of theology be established that Jesus of Nazareth, as he is set forth in the gospels, is real and not fictitious, that is what I wish you to prove from history, other than the gospels, so plain that a jury of impartial men will give you an affirmative verdict. Is this plain enough for you to comprehend it?

It is not sufficient to establish that any false Christ lived in the time of Herod and Pilate, but he must be genuine, both human and divine, or he is worthless as a savior or redeemer, and you know that as well as I do. I am surprised and astonished that any man of your intelligence and presumed candor, should refer me to such authority as Josephus, when you must know that all scholars have long since conceded that his reference to a man, if it be lawful to call him man, etc., is a base Christian forgery, perpetrated by those who translated his history from the Greek, in which language it was written, to make it saleable in Christian lands, and admitting it to be genuine, it would only faintly hint that a mere man lived there and then, and so the reference only weakens the argument. You ought, therefore, to be ashamed to try to thus impose on one, who am not your equal, at least not in scholarship. Your reference to Tacitus is still more unworthy of notice, for you and I both know that he lived and wrote before Christ was born, admitting he was ever born, for he died at the age of 78 in A. D. 17. Therefore the same charge of forgery is made and his reference only weakens the case, and this forgery was perpetrated for the same reason, and you either do or ought to know this to be so, for I know it with less than half the intelligence, I concede to you, so that this is a fair sample of ministerial candor and honesty.

With regard to Homer, you, as well as I, know that his identity or reality is by many able scholars disputed, therefore it is not of any pertinence or value as an illustration, and for aught you or I know, the Iliad and Odyssey may be the product of some other person. Then you refer to Socrates and you know that I never disputed that he



was born in Athens, in April, 469 B. C., of poor parents, and that he emerged from barbaric sophistry into a religion every way as pure as the Christian in its moral precepts, and his life and death in its tragical features was equal to that of Jesus Christ 500 years later. Admitting he died at all, and he only pretended to concern himself with this life and human welfare, and it is only fanaticism that causes any person to do otherwise.

Shakespeare is also in controversy, and future generations will find the same uncertainty about him that is now found about Homer. But all this reference of yours is mere speculation, intended to deceive me, and has no reference or value as illustrating the reality of the savior and redeemer of the lost souls of all humanity for whether they lived or not they never aspired to anything more good or beneficent than the welfare of man in the present life, and therefore, if it be conceded that a Christ has lived, it is yet to be proved that the Christ of the gospels, also has lived, and was crucified, otherwise the religion founded on that mere assumption, and not on a fact, is a sham and a fraud. This then is my question, repeated, and is, if possible, a little more definite: Is there in the official documents or records on file in the libraries of the Roman government, as it existed in the days when Pilate and Herod were governors or magistrates in Judea, and record concerning the administration of these two men, any sentence that in the most distant manner alludes to the advent, the life of 30 years or more, the wonderful miracles, the teachings, the arrest, the trial, the crucifixion, or the resurrection of one Jesus Christ, who was the son of the Virgin Mary, born in Bethlehem, and I will add, can such an account be found anywhere on earth but in the four gospels of the new testament?

The best authority that Europe has ever produced, Voltaire, in his philosophical dictionary, says there is not, for he has himself been there and made the most diligent search with that object in view, and while he succeeded in finding abundant reports that these governors made to the home government of the details of their manner of administering their official duties, with which they were entrusted, not one word can anywhere be found that either Herod or Pilate ever knew of any such a remarkable person being born in Bethlehem; and Herod's ordering the slaughter of all male infants to make it certain that the one who was destined to be a rival to the Roman authority might not live, or any trial being had by either himself, or Pilate, or any one who the Jews wished them to crucify. I am aware that such a bigoted Christian minister as you are will consider Voltaire very poor authority to rely on, to prove any important question about Christ. Is he not at least as good as those you quote, Strauss, Renan, Mill, to prove your side when you class them all as unbelievers.

Voltaire died a Roman Catholic, and was a greater man than all these others combined in one. You pretend to doubt my sincerity or honesty in raising this question. I also doubt your honesty when you deny that you seek to evade giving an answer under the miserable pretence that my question is no more than a mere suggestion of mine, or that it does not amount to a question. I assure you that as I am the first one, as far as I am aware, who has raised this question in this age, I intend to persist in requiring from Christian ministers and theologians a definite affirmative answer or a confession that none is possible, for these unfounded assertions and assumptions of you ministers have been received and believed long enough.

I agree with John Stuart Mill in his estimate of the value of a pure, moral character, but I deny that the gospels portray such a character in Jesus Christ when separated from divinity and transferred to his humanity. On the contrary, I can point out several serious blemishes that detract from perfection, and his statement that no one lived near that time, capable of delineating such a character is manifest or rather it is manifest that those who have attempted it in these gospels have failed to produce it. You ask, Where do you expect to find accounts of Jesus? I answer, everywhere, in all the literature within the scope of the Roman empire, as it existed in the beginning of this era. So stupendous an individual's career as the gospels delineate as belonging to Jesus of Nazareth, would inevitably attract the notice of every writer of history for many centuries, and the already exaggerated details would be still more incredibly exaggerated and impossible than these gospel writers have made this god man appear to have been, for no such an event ever escapes the notice and scrutiny of the historian, for in fact they are always greedy to seize upon and magnify such a miraculous event, and, it therefore would have been impossible to keep private to two or even four unknown, obscure writers, so great an event as the advent, the miracles, the life and the tragic death of such an innocent, inoffensive hero.

Poets would never cease to endeavor to excel each other, to immortalize their memory by constructing the most sublime epics on a theme so much more capable of yielding the requisite inspiration, than any other within the compass of human history, that even *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*, would be too insignificant to be worthy of mention.

When you ask me how came so many Christians in Rome in the time of Nero, and everywhere in all the provinces of the empire, and quote the historian Tacitus as proof, you forget that Tacitus, the historian, had been dead more than fifty years when Nero was emperor of Rome, so this fact is a further proof that your quotation from him is a

forgery, for dead men never write history, but they are in some cases the subjects of history, but perhaps you thought you could impose upon my supposed ignorance of that fact. I would have been glad to have seen the quotation from the letter of Pliny, which you refer to, for I doubt not it is also a mere invention or guess of yours, but as Pliny, the younger, was a literary man, and died 115 A. D., I presume he might find a few Christians by that time, for all not pagans were called Christians. But the Elder Pliny was an Agnostic and a Naturalist, therefore not likely to be a historian, so I have not got to account for the presence of numerous Christians in the Roman empire in the first century, for they were not there in any numbers worth estimating. I would be most willing and ready to discuss this missionary question with you if you wish it at some other time, but as it is not a part of this controversy, it had best be omitted at present at least.

You next engage in a personal matter about yourself. That I as much as admitted you would not in any emergency continue to be enough of a hypocrite to preach after you had ceased to regard Christ as the hope of humanity. You retort savagely, "Do you judge all professed Christians by your own unhappy experience, when after professing Christ 30 years, and then found out your profession was a delusion?" How do you, more than I, conclude that there are some whose profession is not a delusion, and then except yourself by saying, "I think I am not deceived." Why did you not say I know I am not under a delusion? For the reason that you do not know, but only hope you are not. I know you are, and I hope you will discover it yourself, and quit preaching, and earn an honest living in some other and more respectable calling, than to continue to uphold an imposition and fraud, which, but for such as you ministers would soon wholly disappear as soon as the financial aid was withheld, that now is all the inducement any student has to engage in that disreputable calling. You sneer. You allude to me as charging the writers of the gospels with being obscure and ignorant also dishonest, but you dare not, and do not deny it is a true charge, but boast impudently of the permanence of their work. Have I not just given the only reason why it is permanent? I will give it again. Because there is money in it, and every imposition in all time the world over, thrives on money alone.

Do I not know what I say when I suspect the writers of the gospels with intentional dishonesty and fraud? I know well, and it is no mitigation of that suspicion, because you say "it is long since conceded by unbelievers, that whether they were ignorant and deceived, they were at least honest." That is not so conceded by me, or any other skeptic. You next charge me with an unprofitable reading of the new testament.

I assure you I have read it as attentively and as faithfully, and as much as you have, and the more I read it, especially in the last revision, and compare the deviations in the text and references to marginal readings, the more deep and abiding is my individual conviction, that it is only a willful or intentional fraud. You next charge me with having been deceived when I professed to be a Christian, but you admit I might have been honest, as every fool is, and then you jump to the conclusion that I never knew Christ as the life of my soul. Doubtless you thus conclude, because I did not join a Baptist Church, and submit to baptism by immersion, and wind up the sentence by saying, and to give it force, underscoring it like this: "You have professed what you did not possess." This is a specimen of your theology, referring to my experience, you got religion when you didn't know it, for if you knew it, you never had it, and if you had it, you could not lose it, and if you lose it, you never had it. How came you to first be a believer, and then a Baptist, and finally a Baptist minister. I will give a true answer to my question. You had Baptist parents, and was a Baptist in spite of yourself, when you was born. You then was reared a Baptist, and at a full age was baptized by a Baptist, then educated a Baptist, then ordained a Baptist minister, and by this round about process you now think you are also a Christian. You are in name, and I was in name, by just such a process, up to the point of education, and there the parallel ends, for I never had any worth mentioning, and let me warn you, that you are no more safe from apostacy than I was at your age and experience, or than that fictitious, imaginary character brought on the stage in the 9th chapter of Acts, before he, St. Paul, by name, apostatized from the faith of both his own, and his ancestors, for no other reason than because his tutor and instructor, Gamaliel, refused his daughter to him in marriage, and to whom you refer me with so much confidence in Acts 26-29, and give that silly unmeaning verse as a specimen of how a man ought to feel and express himself, after he had for twenty-five years had within him the divine life which Christ imparts. That verse in the revised testaments read as follows, being the concluding sentence of his defence before Agrippa, and a large audience of pagan believers: "And Paul said I would to God that whether with little or with much, not thou only, (Agrippa) but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds." This means, if it means anything, that Paul wished Agrippa to apostatize and turn traitor to his religious convictions, as he had done, for no reason, and also that all that assembly would turn traitors without any good reason, but he warned them, in doing so, not to be as headstrong and rash as he had been, and so escape persecution. If that is how a man feels or how



you feel after twenty-five years Christian experience, the Lord help you and deliver me.

Peter, and all of them, who pretended to have received the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost, refused to fellowship Paul, for the reason, that he had once apostatized, and very likely he would do so again, when his enthusiasm should subside, so they let him wander away alone into remote regions, and there thrive or sink, as best he could. So much for your modelman.

When I alluded to my age, incidentally, it was for the purpose of excusing myself from complying with your desire to have the pleasure of meeting me, for a more intimate acquaintance, at your home, and not for the purpose of instituting a comparison with your father, for I never heard that you had one, till I read your eulogy; but inasmuch as you have, without any cause, as I can see, needlessly dragged him before me, and endeavored to impress me with his superiority over me, by his greater age and his extensive usefulness, I will say that a proper sense of modesty in you would have caused you to refrain from eulogizing your own father to one, who neither knew or cared whether you had a father, or having one, whether he was vicious or virtuous, tyrannical or mild, miserable or happy, but now that he has thus been introduced to my notice by a son who is liable, on that account, to overestimate his importance, I will modestly say, that whatever he is morally I am his equal, and although my sphere of usefulness has not been on the same lines, or on as extensive a field, for he is a life-long missionary to Indians, and making large allowance for your enthusiasm, I can, without boasting, show as good results as any one with my opportunities, but both your father and yourself would be immediately isolated and anathematized if you should deviate one iota from the most slavish subjection to Baptist doctrines or discipline, and you know not how he will end his days, or when ended, what will be either his destiny or your own, and I can assure you that as much faith and hope as you both have, I would not take either of your chances, and give you mine in exchange for this world alone, to say nothing about another, for I consider that the average close communion Baptist has not got a soul of sufficient size to be worth saving.

You manifest, in these six questions you ask me about my individual prospects, a contempt and spite characteristic of all Baptists, for they, none of them, ever have a generous and manly impulse, and send everybody to the devil, who refused to be soused bodily into a tank of tepid water. Now, you in conclusion of your long letter in which you say you have not expended one-tenth of the abuse you feel, probably because I have put you into a hole from which you cannot extricate

yourself, and now that you have inadvertently no doubt revealed yourself to me, to my satisfaction, to have the character of a sham, contemptible hypocrite, notwithstanding your pretended snivelling attachment, to a false or imaginary Christ, about whom you know nothing, under a superstitious impression that a large amount of false instruction has regenerated your little, worthless soul, and filled it with a sickening reverence for a Christ, who never did or never will live.

Now, I have written plainly just as you did, but I trust, not without showing a proper indignation at your insulting allusion to my want of reverence for your imaginary Christ, which I do not believe is anything but a myth or fraud and imposition, and I am abundantly able to understand and comprehend the scope of your pretended solicitude for my spiritual condition, and your object in asking these six insulting questions, at the close of your valedictory or final leave taking of me, and I can also plainly see that you consider your labor with me to have been in vain, for I have the long end of the rope, of which you have only the short end, and when my book is published of which a thousand pages of manuscript is already written, an expose will be made of Christianity, by one who knows what it is, from actual experience, that will be both unique and astounding, that will find a ready sale among all grades and kinds of skeptics, and all irreligious persons, who have long been waiting for some one to enter the lists against this monstrous organization, that has possession, undisputed, of a position, which by long possession and perfect organization, they regard as unassailable. Whatever you may be as a Baptist, or even as a religious man, it is certain from the high esteem which your fulsome eulogy of your father discloses, you possess towards him, it is certain that you are not a Christian, according to an authority, even you cannot dispute.

If you will refer to Luke 14, 26, you will find a receipt which contains the necessary ingredients of which to make a genuine Christian, and to save your time to look it up, I will quote it from the revised version: "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." These ingredients are the invention of the Christ of the gospels, and the credit of this discovery belongs to him alone, and no one therefore has a claim to be considered or to consider himself to be a Christian who does not swallow whole this prescription. Therefore, I say you are only a Baptist minister, for you evidently do not hate your father, and may be not your wife and children, but I am not sure of that, for you have not told me about them and the impudent snubs that Christ often gave his mother fully establishes the fact that he hated her. In the 2nd John 4th verse

is one of these snubs, which is a very saucy retort for a son to give his mother in a public, mixed company. She only gently reminded him that the wine was all consumed, and he turned and told her in substance "to shut your mouth and mind your own business," and he always ignored his brothers, and incurred the undying hate of all the Jews by reason of his abusive language to them, every time he was given the privilege to speak in their synagogues, calling them whited sepulchres, serpents, vipers, devourers of widows' houses, and other vile abuse as low and mean as he could invent, showing a vile temper and a vindictive disposition.

You say further that you have acquainted yourself with all the objectors to Christianity, from Celsus, in the second century, down to 1892. The identity or the reality of Celsus is disputed the same as in the case with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the time, and place, when he or they, wrote is still more uncertain, if it is admitted they ever wrote, but what was written by some objector is as much beyond your power to either comprehend or refute, with the bigoted conception and narrow dwarf intellect with which theology always curses its victims, as it would be for a man to create a universe. Acquainted yourself indeed? Why as smart a man as the Eunuch Origen, who was employed for that purpose to refute Celsus, could no more refute Celsus, or whoever it was, than I could, and you can't refute even me. You show very poor acquaintance with history in your references, and a brazen conceit about your own abilities, but you seem to have great comfort in your divine, imaginary master and redeemer. I hope what I have written will not disturb that comfort, but I fear it will. In your postscript, or after thought, in your long letter, in which letter you say that, long as it is, you have not said one-tenth of what you want to say, and which I am sorry you did not say, to ease your mind, you make the following points which I will briefly notice:

1st. All concede that Jesus lived. If you mean Jesus of Nazareth, I do not, neither does any skeptic. You do and so do your gang, therefore all do or must. 2nd. All concede that the disciples of Jesus were honest men. If you mean simply the twelve who were constantly with him, I consider them, by the description of the gospel writers, that they were so many fools to leave their own homes and families for the sake of wandering about the country without any occupation or income like so many mere tramps, and whatever the rest were as to honesty, Judas was surely not regarded by his master or associates as a very honest man, and the whole thirteen robust, able-bodied men either stole their food and clothes for some three years, more or less, or begged it, for they never earned a dollar or were worth a dollar, only mere paupers.



3rd. The problem of unbelief is on this basis. 1st. To explain the belief in supernatural Christianity. The belief in that had its origin in the invention of the system itself, by or through a union of Judaism and paganism, with the declared intention and design to ultimately supercede and destroy Judaism, and establish Christianity on its ruins, which design has so far ridiculously miscarried. 2nd. The existence of the new testament. The question is very ambiguous or obscure. Do you mean to ask how it has survived when it was a deception only up to this time, or do you mean how it came into being? I will explain both of these propositions, and so shall set the whole matter right. It came into being by the same process that all fiction comes into being. It is the invention and a very imperfect and clumsy one of a conceited set of both Jew and pagan fanatics or enthusiasts, who perceived at one period in history that Roman, civil and military authority, would inevitably destroy Judaism and supercede it by paganism, unless these fanatics could by combining the two systems by mutual concessions, unite and defeat such an anticipated result or consummation by creating or inventing a new mongrel form of imposition and deception, which these first inventors in after times agreed to give the name of Christianity, and hold to, and did invent the Christ of the new testament, which is another edition of the Christna of the pagans by omitting the two final letters, and he was put on the stage, and had the same miraculous nature as Christna of the pagans had, but came of Jewish stock, on the mother's side, and from divine source on the supernatural or pagan side, as Christna also did. The crop of ambitious writers was so abundant among these two sets of fanatics, that by admitting the whole of them to be divinely inspired too large a volume would be required, so after about the first half of the third century a council of these representative or head men, both Jews and pagans, was held in the city of Laodicea, to select such writings, by debate and ballot, which might be authorized as proper to read in the Christian assemblies, and reject by a majority vote such as were uninspired. A second council later admitted the epistle of James, second Peter, second and third John, and Revelations, which the former had rejected and denounced in the last verses of Revelations a fearful woe or penalty on any further addition or subtraction. This is the way the new testament came into its existence. The way it has survived and will continue to survive, is the same way that all impositions survive for the discovery was early made that there is a mine of wealth to be dissipated into many millions of streams of revenue, to discharge into first, the treasury of the hierarchy, and in turn, into the capacious greedy pockets of the priests of various grades, who have a direct interest to make this golden stream constant, large



and perpetual. This is the explanation of the origin of the new testament. 3rd. The origin of the Christian Church. The writer of Acts of the Apostles, whoever it was, invented a ridiculous performance at Jerusalem, on one of the days of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which performance of electrical legerdemain was called the descent of the Holy Ghost.

This electrical or magnetic humbug was a pre-arranged contrivance of some Egyptian or Chinese juggler, and had for its main object, to make money, and also to astonish and impress a gaping crowd of ignorant Jewish boobies, who had come from distant regions to celebrate this annual feast, and this performance was the germ from which both Christianity and the Christian church grew, and steadily increased, till Constantine, the great Roman emperor, who afterwards became the first Pope, got converted by a vision or pretence that he had seen the cross on which Christ was crucified in the clouds in the day time, but it is far more likely he had a fit of delirium tremens, and he then, unopposed constituted himself the head of the church, and gathered the contending factions of Jews and pagans, and harmonized them by force, into what finally has developed the monstrosity, called, or miscalled, the Christian church, such as it is, for it is only a hybrid, unworthy of a name. I hope I have answered your impudent letter as it deserves. If I have not, if you will point out my deficiencies, I will do so later. If you considered my former letter revealed a spite to Christ, to his apostles, to Christian missionaries, what do you think of this letter.

I am indifferent to what you either think or say. I am your equal and the equal of your wonderful father, in natural, mental capacity and ability to resent an insult. I have now endeavored, in compliance with your wish, expressed in your last letter, of the 29th of November, to give a definite form to my question; also, I have told the attitude of my own mind towards it as plainly, but not as fully as I am able. I am aware that you will consider some of this letter rather ungentlemanly, it not abusive, but I really felt indignant when I read the personal part of your letter, for it was both uncalled for and insulting for you to parade the perfections of your father before me, and then by comparison, allude to what you are pleased to consider my deficiencies, and therefore I feel I am justified in showing a proper dignity by resenting it as I have done. In your reference to your venerable father, you recite how much good he has done, how many he has assisted, temporally and spiritually, how many counties in the province of Ontario love and honor him, and close your eulogy in these words: "One of these days he will leave this world as happy as a man leaves his work at 6 o'clock, to go to his home." What an absurd comparison. Do all men go

home happy? You know they do not, and neither your father or yourself will die any happier than I will. You then ask, "Can you give as good a showing, or better one than my old father?" "How many lives have you blessed? How many human hearts have you cheered? How many hundreds love you and honor you, How happy will you be when you die?" I will simply say in reply to these impudent questions, all this is none of your business, therefore, I consider I am justified in expressing a feeling of resentment and contempt for your wilful and intentional insult, and no apology will be made, and no answer to this letter is either expected or desired.

The above correspondence is a fair sample, as to length, as to argument, and other matters concerning the same question which I have had with four other of the most orthodox Christian ministers in Rochester, with the same result.

This transaction, as a whole, is involved in so many great improbabilities that those who are wholly destitute of superstition, or those who do not take or accept the Bible as inspiration or divine revelation, cannot find sufficient evidence upon which to found even a weak belief, to say nothing about certainty, it therefore seems to them more probable that those who invented the miracles of Christ, also invented this story of his crucifixion, and therefore that the whole improbable story, is mere fiction of some deluded and fanatical persons, of a long subsequent age, after the time of Pilate and Herod, and was located in that period, because that was the very last moment when secular history would allow the Jews to have had a national, though subject existence, in Palestine or Judea; and as all religions have required, and had a dead hero, who died a dramatic or violent death, as much as impossible miracles, and both could be invented in a subsequent age, and placed by the inventor, or impostor, far enough in the past to make verification impossible, and the imposture successful, by the placing those startling extremes of goodness and badness, and keeping them in constant contact through the whole of this invented transaction, and the crowding of so many dramatic incidents in so short a space, covering at most, only three years, and some good authorities say only one year, shows the work of a master of fictitious composition. The betrayal of such a good Jesus, by such a bad Judas, with the most affectionate salutation of, "hail master," and the hypocritical kiss, the forsaking him by all his other trusted disciples, the denial by Peter after such a strong promise to stick by him to the last, the corruption and illegal proceeding of all the judges, the perjury of all the witnesses, the treachery and maladministration of Pilate and Herod, the choice by the people of Barabbas, a robber, to be set at liberty, to repeat his robberies, in preference to

Jesus, the insane fury of a mob, and the unparalleled cruelty and brutality of the Roman soldiers to such a meek and tender nature as Christ's was, in and through this whole tragic scene, the placing the spotless, innocent Jesus between two thieves, the plea of one dying thief for remembrance, and the profane jeering of the other, and finally, the piteous cries of agony, mingled with a prayer to his father, for his crucifiers, constitute together the greatest number of dramatic or tragic situations, found before that time in either history, or fiction, and has not yet been exceeded, and such a combination as could not have actually occurred, and the writer or inventor of these dramatic incidents was not himself able to delineate them, so, that they even seem real, but are contradictory, for want of ability of the writer to invent a consistent story, having so many situations, not understood by this writer, being so far removed in point of time, about three hundred years, and also being so remote from the locality, and depending almost or quite wholly on unreliable tradition, for important facts, to make such an attempt successful, but, to a credulous and ignorant people sufficient, to partially satisfy some of them, who, after much contention and mutual concessions, have or did in time result in founding, and establishing a new religion, being a compromise between paganism and Judaism, and an agreement after much dispute and a long period of undecided contention, about a suitable name, to call it, Christianity, and accept of the fictitious, or imaginary Christ, which these writers portrayed as its foundation. The darkness of the sun for three hours, beginning at midday, and the local earthquake that woke the dead and restored them to their former friends, thus nullifying the effects of many years of decomposition, completed this wonderful scene, and the resurrection of this crucified Christ was so private, no one ever has been able to tell precisely when it occurred, but these gospels all agree that one night, and one day, and a part of the next night, completed the time of absence of life, instead of three days and three nights, which he had before assigned as the period he was to remain dead, because Jonah was that long in the whale's belly, thus giving his sanction to that miserable lie.

The resurrection of the body, is the only peculiarity or new feature about Christianity that is confessedly original. All other of its doctrines and absurdities, are either copies of some form of Judaism or of Paganism, mixed with the Jewish form, for its founder, Christ, if he every lived at all, was a Jew, and its first disciples were all Jews, and Jews were the only people on earth, this Jewish founder ever intended to have any share in his salvation, for he himself forbade those who he sent out, to even enter any city of the Gentiles, and also he always refused his personal help to any but Jews, and said repeatedly, that he

was only sent to find the lost sheep belonging to the house of Israel, but notwithstanding these precautions the Jews, to a man refused to tolerate either him or his twelve associates, and utterly rejected him, so, the apostles had to turn to the Gentiles, although in his time he considered them beneath his notice, and intimated to a Gentile woman who applied to him for help, he considered them only as so many dogs and his disciples were forbidden to heal any of them who came to them for that purpose, or even to try to instruct them in the end to prevent this new imposition from entirely collapsing and disappearing the Gentiles were welcomed. These cunning first impostors, such as Peter and his associates, and later Paul and his associates, were forced to compromise and proclaim broadly, and loudly, in every place where they could get a hearing, Whosoever will let him come; if he has any money, particularly, and partake of the water of life freely, as to quantity, provided he can freely pay for it the price demanded, which in most cases is his whole fortune, for there is no class of blood suckers who are so greedy as the Christian priests, stimulated as they always are by their ecclesiastical superiors, the Popes and various grades of bishops, and there is no source so prolific of religious theories, and so ingenious to invent plausible and cunning arguments, to uphold their abominable and impossible assumptions, and when some distinguished leader, on account of his superior energy or ability, demonstrates by the exercise of such energy, that he is thus endowed, he then receives their sanction and support, until his untenable new and strange inventions become so far advanced as to be acquiesced in by inferior or subordinate grades of theologians, who, in a general council adopt them, after discussing them sufficient to produce conviction, and then compel their dupes, who look to them for salvation, both here and hereafter, to also adopt them, on their simple recommendation, without giving them any reason or alternative, but require a universal acquiescence to such monstrous untruthful doctrines and absurdities, as every creed in Christendom is composed of, as for example the Apostles creed, used by all Episcopalians which recites, "I believe in God, the Father, who is almighty, and in Jesus Christ, his son, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, etc.," and no minister who is compelled by these tyranical leaders to first acquire, in addition to the highest academical course of instruction, to also go through a college course of mental discipline of four collegiate years, and get their indorsement or diploma containing the autograph signatures of all its faculty or board of professors, to prove it to be genuine, and then go to some theological seminary, under the control of the denomination, to which the applicant for admission has by this time become a member, and after



passing examination by the faculty of such institution, to prove his religious professions to be genuine, if it is satisfactory, but not otherwise, he is then compelled to pay for, and receive another four years course of theological training and instruction in their prescribed way or method, and if he is found worthy at the end of this course, and not otherwise, he gets their diploma or certificate, from that faculty, containing the autograph of the whole faculty, certifying that he is worthy to be trusted, and relied upon to uphold the creed to which he has given his sworn promise to always adhere, and thus endorsed and fortified, he is in a position to begin to prey upon some unsuspecting, innocent, and ignorant community, and by his acquirements, is so far above those to whom he is the spiritual guide and instructor, that no one is supposed to be competent to question any statement he chooses to make, who, however poor they may be, and scarcely able to carry such burdens, as every day's necessities compel them to carry, they are taught from their infancy to maturity, that religious instruction has more value than any or all other acquisitions, and is also indispensable, and so they resolutely resolve to add one more needless burden to their already overburdened and poor ability to furnish the means to employ and support this greedy, hungry candidate, who comes with these indorsements which have caused his financial ruin, by wasting ten or more years, and a vast sum of money, to make him fit for a holy robber, which he simply is, and nothing more, for he must be paid a large salary annually, and give you nothing of any value in return, for none of these expensive preparations are necessary to enable any person to teach the highest grade of morality, which is all there is of any value in the preaching of any priest, in any form of religion, and this is the burden the infidel and every grade of skeptic, proposes to remove from society, by holding it up to ridicule, and demonstrating its utter worthlessness, and by taking away such foundations of mere mud or quicksand as that which we find recorded in the beginning of the book of Geneses, about the origin of man and woman.

There never was a mature intellect of even a low grade, that could ever be made to believe any such story if he was to find it recorded in any other book than this so-called Holy Bible, but when children are instructed from the first dawn of their capacity to receive instruction, that the book in which this incredible story is written, and a great many others equally mysterious is recorded, is the inspired word of God, and must be believed without hesitation, and this instruction is continued, and this false impression is made more firm by later Sunday-school instruction, and still later in the modern new discovery, called Christian Endeavor Societies, so firm a lodgment is in this manner

secured, that much contrary instruction is required, and much unanswerable proof adduced, before any perceptible impression can be made to cause such person to begin the first doubt. This creation story is told in two directly contradictory ways in these first accounts, so that it is evident, that two writers or more wrote without divine assistance, but we will not now refer to more than two who wrote concerning man. At the end of the sixth day man appears, the noblest of earth's inhabitants, man alone, and not man and woman, and, after he had been placed in the garden of Eden, it was discovered there was a defect, for man alone could not increase, therefore woman must be created; and in the second chapter the order is changed, so that instead of man being created the last, he was the first in the order of creation, and then the creator, seeing his solitary condition, creates the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and when brought to the protoplast, man, they were insufficient to supply his mental void, so that woman was made, to complete the machinery by which more human beings were produced; and that process is so repugnant to common sense, that it is one of the most stupendous wonders how it ever found a place in divinely inspired history.

It is no wonder that theologians feared that this book, on which the rotten structure of orthodoxy is built, would be criticized, and thus cause the structure itself to fall into deserved and irretrievable ruin, and when these holy humbugs ask us what we propose to give as a substitute, we reply that those who destroy weeds and thistles are public benefactors, and whoever destroys a venomous reptile is not bound to put a harmless or beneficial one in its place, for it is a public benefit to be rid of the reptile, and these are sufficient answers to satisfy us. But further, we ask in all candor, is the mere hope of heaven, to preserve and create which is considered of supreme value, worth any more to the one who has it to the end of his life, than it is worth to him, who, in a similar position is tormented by the fear of an endless hell of fire and brimstone, to be got rid of by our instruction? For we abolish both, by destroying the unfounded hope of heaven, and the damnable fear of hell, but the priest says hold on, for anarchy would be universal, the moment you remove the restraints of religious instruction from any people, they would lapse straightway into barbarism. We reply, if you eliminate morality from religion, it is that which gives it all the restraining force it has, and which is the basis on which alone we stand, and also that religion alone, never has rescued any people from barbarism, and so, if we abolish religion, or the useless worry about a future life, which is the only foundation for any form of religion, when it is separated from morality, the change, instead of being detrimental to the highest form

of civilization, would be only salutary and beneficial, and in place of the vast outlay that is constantly made to keep alive superstitious reverence, for that on which such reverence is founded, which is not real, but only imaginary, you devote such enormous outlay to the acquirement of scientific knowledge, so much superiority in the condition of all grades of society would immediately be apparent, that so far would the people be from any tendency to go back to barbarism that, they would not even desire to return to their former condition, when science, was obliged to fight theology, inch by inch, in order to maintain such ground as they, by the most patient and persistent toil had rescued from blind ignorance and bigotry, without daring to attempt to explore new fields in the face of such formidable opposition, as the church, through its ecclesiastical authority was everywhere arrayed against them, would not be so much as proposed or even thought of. The insignificance to which scientific discovery, notwithstanding its opposition, by religious contemptible bigots, has reduced this little speck of dust, when compared to what science by its discoveries discloses to be in existence outside of this speck we call the earth, on which we are so proud to dwell, and the system of which it forms only a small part, is such in the mind of the astronomer, that it is to him wonderful and astounding, why so much importance and solicitude is required, or supposed by theologians to be required, as to the destiny of its few inhabitants, who are not altogether a drop, when compared with what the whole of the universe contains, as to justify so much notice, and interference on the part of its imaginary creator, for no human intelligence has yet found a first cause, except an imaginary one, from whom creation has been derived, and there is not the faintest prospect that there ever will any nearer approach be had to a solution of this question in the future, for no progress has yet been made in such investigation, and universal humanity is yet involved in the same uncertainty, as it was when the inquiry first originated; which was as soon as any being we call human, had enough mental ability to develop a capacity to as much as desire information, for at the first as now, his god was a mere imaginary fancy, just the same as that of the conception of the highest and most distinguished religious theologians, who all refuse to call nature god now is, and always will be as long as they adhere to that unfounded belief, and refuse to consider nature capable of producing, unassisted, all the results observed, and comprehended by the most able and highly endowed intelligence, which sciences when they are assisted by the powerful influences by which they always have been opposed, and are now opposed, will be then able to demonstrate.

It is not a fair presumption that this speck called earth, is a development of some small fragment of cast off, useless material, of some magnificent system, which was so imperceptible, when compared to that system as a whole, but which men are all apt, when they remain uninstructed to regard as the whole world, and the only world that exists, and which, small as it is, is itself beyond the feeble grasp of the clouded vision of the religious fanatic, whose insignificant intellectual capacity is filled to overflowing with the one small idea of a future world called heaven, and a future life he calls eternity, all of which is wholly imaginary, a purely only worthless invention of gross superstition, utterly incomprehensible, unthinkable, and unreal; but it is on that very account, held forth by the priests as the supreme concern of all humanity, and therefore needed a system such as the one as the Christianity of the past age invented and gave to the world, which revealed and disclosed the world, to do which required the ignoring of all natural theories, or discoveries, and substituting, and making conspicuously prominent, the supernatural, or in other words the superstitious and the miraculous. To the naturalist, or the materialist, there is not the slightest difficulty to account for the origin of all matter and mind, without referring anything to a supernatural god at all, for the earth on which we live being but a mere speck of created things, could have had the same origin as those which it has been derived from had, which was a development from a germ, by the operation of natural laws.

There is no pretence by any theologian, that his imaginary god has any interest, or in fact had anything to do with creating anything but this earth, and its appurtenances, and as the sun, moon and stars are visible to the inhabitants on the earth, it is added in Genesis the words which are undoubtedly a forgery of the translators, "He made the stars also;" but none of these were necessary, but were simply for ornament and light, but the scientist sees in them an indispensable relation or connection, without which the earth could never have existed, or continued to exist, and he also sees that one form of life as much as another is directly dependent on the sun, so intimately that if it should cease to shine one moment, death would be universal, and therefore when he is required by the theologian, or the priest, to believe that the sun, and with it the system to which it is the regulator, at some ascertained, definite time and manner, was created out of nothing, by a mere word or thought of a supernatural self-existent being, who, for want of a more expressive word is named god, he declines most respectfully to assent to any such impossible belief, and of course if he rejects that, he must also reject what follows in that untruthful narrative, concerning the temptation, the fall, the expulsion from Eden, and regard the nar-



ratives of the Bible as so many fables or allegories, and the historical, as unimportant and unreliable, but the moral as salutary and beneficial, but neither new, or better than the world by mere instinct, without the teachings of any form of religion has always had. Criticism of any important subject, or even of any subject regarded as important by any respectable body of our fellow men, is not only just and proper, but is a duty, which the critic must fearlessly discharge.

Modern criticism has become so general, and so searching, that it is proper to inquire what it is, so as to decide as to its scope and candor, for it is simply deciphering a superstitious hieroglyphic, or unintelligible jargon, in so clear a manner as to defy contradiction. The belief in a revelation, or supernatural order of things, takes (if it is allowed to have its legitimate influence), its strongest weapon, for it is simply and only the remains of the first or original conception of the world, and the manner by which it came into being, which conception began at a time when man had not arrived at more than a very indistinct perception of the laws of nature. The naturalist, or materialist, is called upon to prove their impossibility, which he never can do, still, the whole of this conception is such as to be impossible in our days, however reasonable it might have appeared to antiquity. The belief in the miraculous is the consequence of the ancients having considered the world to be governed by fantasy, instead of unchangeable laws; but the modern supernaturalist looks at it somewhat different. Science has so modified his views, and clarified his perceptions, that he dare not refuse to admit a stable or a permanent order of things in nature, so, he falls back upon the supposition, that the action of god may or must change now and then, not perceiving, however, that a changeable god is no god, and thus a miracle is a deviation from the established laws of nature; but it is to be noticed, that such was not the conception of primitive man. The miracle in those days, such as the standing still of the sun and moon, and likewise those of the new testament, was not regarded as supernatural, for this idea only appears after the true ideas of the laws of nature have been clearly demonstrated, and was so far become self-evident to the supernaturalist, that he is compelled to reconcile the marvelous, with that which has been demonstrated by experiment and analysis, and formulated and expressed by abilities which he has been compelled to admit, were superior to his own, and this slow and difficult process has delayed and hindered progress, so that these who clearly see that the supernatural must finally yield, are still too timid to admit the truth which they perceive, and so, still are disposed to adopt the marvelous improved theories, with that which experiment is able to and has over and over again clearly demonstrated. Such is

the tenacity, and the supposed obligation to maintain the error of the ancient bigoted fool of a theologian in his wild speculations and assumptions, that they only propose a half-hearted or insincere compromise, between the primitive idea and the idea of experiment.

The miracle confronted the primitive man at every step in life, and seemed to him perfectly natural, for, neither nature, nor its laws were more than faintly, if at all, perceived by these simple souls. Such laws come on later, when the human intellects became more thoughtful and cultivated, also expanded so as to be able to comprehend, and finally to discover some of the most simple of these laws, for many of them yet remain, and always will remain, beyond the grasp of the best intellects, but yet enough is now positively known, to very effectually destroy the supernatural idea. The simplest minded savage, now admits the miracle without the slightest difficulty. It is not from one argument only, but from the whole aggregate when combined, that the scientist derives his conclusions, which are tremendous and irresistible, because the modern discoveries of science have disclosed them, and he therefore boldly asserts and proves this advanced proposition, and will maintain such discoveries against all comers, which proposition is in these words: There is not now, nor there never was such a thing or phantom as supernatural, either god or devil, but he does not say he can refute those who persist in believing that there is, by argument alone, for that is impossible, as before has been stated, for he will snap his fingers at every argument, just as a savage does when you strive to convince him of the absurdity of his fetichis, or his objects of adoration, which are really only so many fables or dreams.

No process of converting a savage from his object of divine adoration, and get him to adopt a superior one, is of any use, for that only changes the object, but before any good impression can be made on him, you must civilize him, educate him, till he can climb the ladder up to your level, and that is always or chiefly done, by gradually cultivating social friendly feelings, and introducing commercial intercourse; and in like manner the orthodox supernaturalist is unassailable; no logical or metaphysical statement has the slightest effect on him. The only cure for supernaturalism, which to the unutterable disgrace of the highest civilization has not yet disappeared from humanity, is modern culture, which must be intensified and long continued, before the average intellect can be raised to the level of science, for all men, before they are able to grapple with science, must divest their intellectual faculties from every trace of superstition, bigotry, or fanaticism; and then by much culture and refinement, and with a special gift for some branch of scientific discovery, and sufficient perseverance and instruction, he finally

attains to celebrity, and so by such a process, without any struggle, or the need of any argument, all these superannuated superstitions, will, one by one, drop away.

Since the beginning of existence, every event that has happened in the world of phenomena, has been but the regular and undeviating development of the laws relating to such phenomena, and which constitute one sole order that governs such phenomena: "Nature;" whoever speaks of anything as being above or beyond nature in the order of facts, is just as guilty of contradiction, as he would be if he spoke of the superdivine, a mere attempt to rise above the highest. Nature is simply human reason, to the exclusion of everything that savors of the whimsical, or in other words of the supernatural, and the task of the modern scientist will not be accomplished, till he has utterly and forever destroyed every vestige of the belief in the supernatural, in every conceivable shape, as he has long ago destroyed astrology, magic, and witchcraft. Supernaturalism includes all these, and much more like these, and posterity will look back upon those who are striving to abolish supernaturalism in our day, as we look upon those who fought against the belief in magic in the seventeenth century. What a miserable set of humbugs and villains, the orthodox bigot and fanatic always was, and is. He taunts the scientist, and those who give heed to science, with being infidels, skeptics, atheists, and what not; when it is they who are the skeptics, and we the believers. We naturalists believe in the discoveries of modern science of these days, in its value and its future utility, and you, curse it as well as refuse to believe in it. We believe in the reason, and you insult it. We believe in humanity, in its capabilities, and in its future attainments. You orthodox fanatics and bigots, scorn it. We, atheists, infidels, and what not, believe in the innate goodness of man's nature, and the rectitude of his intentions as a whole, notwithstanding his lapses from virtue in the presence of strong temptation, on account of his ignorance and his inexperience, which, when acquired, will instruct and guide him aright, and also in his ability, unassisted by any kind of religion, to attain to as perfect a state as his situation demands, and that will be reached much sooner, and more satisfactory to human welfare, without, than with, religion; for the mind of man cramped and circumscribed by the narrow bounds which any form of religion makes necessary and imperative, dwarfs all aspirations, and destroys all ability to investigate in any direction, and a foolish reverence for what has neither existence, or value, compels an acquiescence in any imposition, the unprincipled priesthood chooses to invent and prescribe.

You wretches, shake your heads at such pleasing truths, and lay all your stress on the inherent natural evil of human nature, on the account of the allegorical transactions, which scripture records as having occurred six thousand years before the present race was born, in a fictitious paradise; and if any of this sin-cursed race manifest an aspiration towards an idealism, you rascals denounce such aspirations as the work of Satan, and you will talk any one blind who will listen to you, of rebellion, of sin, of punishment, of free salvation, by mere mock repentance, of expiation, whatever that may mean, of redemption, of atonement, vicarious and efficacious, of humiliation, of penitence, of the fierce executioner or hangman, figuratively of him or to him, who should hear no word from your unholy lips, but encouragement in striving for higher attainments in every kind of knowledge and virtue. We also believe in everything that is true, we love everything that is beautiful, and you, being wilfully blind to all these things, pass through this beautiful world of ours without as much as bestowing one smile upon it; and besides rave and howl continually in our ears about it, as if it was only a cemetery, and universal life only a funeral procession. Instead of the reality and beauty which we see, and greatly admire, you cherish an abstraction, and not only hug and embrace it yourself, but urge us also to do the same.

Now, in view of all this true showing, which of us denies? You mere orthodox, bigoted, ignorant fanatics, or we, liberal minded, free and intelligent atheists, and infidels of all grades. And he who denies is not he the skeptic, instead of he who examines, investigates, and if convinced, admits? The most searching scrutiny into the theology of the Chinese, has failed to discover any idea of either a personal god or devil, or a future life, and no word in their language can be found, as even a name for the supernatural being called by Jews, Christians and others, God; but yet, it is a great mistake to say, as you Christians do, that they are a nation without either morality, religion, or god; but yet the notorious fact remains, that they have no god, as we or you conceive him to be, and therefore the first Christian missionaries, had not only to invent a god for them, according to such missionaries' conception, but also invent a word, to add to their language, and no translation of the Christians' Bible into the Chinese language is possible, for such reasons, and any pretended translation which they assert in their lying missionary reports, is a dastardly fraud, the same as the rest of their lying statements of success in gaining converts from one false religion to another, still more false if that is possible.

What is theology, as taught to all who aspire to get their living out of the humbug called the Christian religion? The priest must be



instructed in theology of this variety, if it is anything at all, for it is nothing but a long drawn subtlety, a perpetual weapon, with which one who has it, hopes thereby to be able to defend the confessedly weak position of him, who has spent so much time and money to get, only a perpetual struggle to maintain an untenable position in religious imposture; for it is only that system which is not progressive that remains stationary. Can any being be any more motionless, than the numbskull nonentity who has never lived the life enlightened by intellectual culture, or of one who has never tried to see but one side of a disputed question? Such an one takes this ground; I do not want to vary, therefore I must not think, or investigate. Orthodoxy feels safe and unassailable for the reason that it has placed itself outside of human nature and reason. For what is orthodoxy? is a proper inquiry; and when did it originate, and where?

At Westminster, in the city of London, a council of delegates from the whole body of Puritanical dissenters, assembled and remained in session seven years, about two hundred and fifty years ago; and orthodoxy, as we have it, was the offspring; and by reason of this long period of undisturbed possession, and by improving every opportunity to entrench and strengthen its weak position, it has become so petrified, and stereotyped in its forms, that it is now very unwilling to cast off its past history, or its past attainments; has got so far beyond and independent of the pale of progress, so rigid, so overbearing and unbending, that while science and philosophy is always far in advance of humanity, orthodox theology lags far behind; and is obliged to remain stationary, on the penalty of forfeiting the conditions of its existence. What a disgraceful squabble is now in progress, to correct the past faults and misconceptions of orthodoxy, when the now concentrated and fiercely debated question is raised, such as the need of the radical revision of the rigid creed made at Westminster, which among other now perceived mistakes and absurdities, was one which regarded and asserted, that the Roman Catholic church was anti-Christ, which result was reached after more than a year of fierce debate, and finally they were excluded by a mere majority vote, of a nest of as mean bigots as ever assembled for any purpose, and now as Christianity with all its efforts in orthodox ways to keep at least even, is manifestly losing ground, and if it longer persists in withholding the name of Christian from the Roman church, who are increasing at a fearful rate as compared to orthodoxy, and are likely soon to outnumber all other Christians, the anticipated result will be reached that Christianity without this concession, will eventually entirely disappear. This superannuated action of two hundred and fifty years' standing, is now being reconsidered, and the result will be

that Roman Catholics will be included, when the orthodox sects boast of their strength and wonderful success in spreading Christianity in the world.

Another concession is demanded in these days, and will be insisted on, which is that relating to the damnation of unbaptized infants, or as these holy rascals called them non elect infants, that must be now eliminated from this creed, which contains this monstrous absurdity, as well as the untenable doctrine of predestination or election, the exclusive invention of a holy impostor by the name of John Calvin, who might have afterwards saved Servitus, who was every way his superior, from the flames of martyrdom by a word, but would not, for fear that he would become a rival, and would not therefore coincide with him in all his vile, abominable inventions of a theological description. All these and many more untenable tenets which science has forced theologians to defend, and which the late higher criticism have discovered to be erroneous, to the extent that they are denounced by these critics as untrue, as well as untenable; but these untenable and untrue portions of the creeds, are yet defended by a set of old superannuated moss backs, who perceive, that if they now admit these items are now untrue, it follows they always were, and a consequence, admission would thus be made, that the church has so far at least been built on error only. This demand for a thorough revision of the orthodox creeds, comes from the young and progressive theologians, who perceive that unless they materially modify the requirements of the graduates of the theological seminaries, who are prepared to be ordained as ministers, with authority to teach and preach the gospel, their theological seminaries, and as a result their vacant pulpits, can no longer be filled.

This criticism of ancient formularies, has been made for the most part by those who, while wishing to retain their respect and veneration for the scripture, as it has been formerly explained to them, perceive by the partial and the prejudiced views with which they must necessarily look at the discoveries of science, (which is only an incident and not a pursuit) that the idea of an infallible revelation as they have been taught the Bible is, must soon be abandoned; for it and science, in many instances are in direct conflict, and at least a compromise must be submitted to by theology, so that the more advanced professors, are, lately, one after another giving public notice to the trustees or managers, that they will no longer submit to dictation, from those who are so rigid, and unreasonable, that they refuse to look at criticism; so, of course, the admission is freely made by the critic, that the results he claims, cannot be proved to those who are either too indolent, or too indifferent, to examine the position taken by the critic, for such results must be per-

ceived, by a course of training, sufficient to overcome prejudice, or bigotry, and submitted to a thorough culture of the perceptive faculties, and this course has already been pursued, by all these who are now demanding a radical change or revision of creeds, and longer and more thorough study, and comparison, will oblige the future student, to demand the total abolition of all creeds; for it would be just as unreasonable to think you could convince a man who obstinately refuses to look through a microscope, that the water he is about to drink is alive, with, to him, invisible animalculæ, and he demands proof of that statement, which you cannot give on account of his refusal to look and be convinced, as it is for those who oppose the revelations of science, which the scientist, without the slightest design or intention by his researches, to find the means to refute revelation, but simply to ascertain the truth, has enabled the skeptic, or doubters, to compare such discoveries with revelation, and he will not so far yield to doubt the infallibility of revelation as to make a comparison, or believe those who have made a comparison, and assure them in the most positive terms of the result thereof, when on every other subject, these latter are considered truthful and reliable. So that the critic has no other resource but to leave them to enjoy their ignorance, and fancied safety by themselves for it is worse than useless to discuss great truths with small intellects, who are determined to remain such, for obstinate denial, proceeding from ignorance and prejudice cannot be grappled with successfully, and therefore it is impossible for such reasons, to make a man see who is determined not to see, for men differ in nothing more radically than in their inability to have the same impressions from the same objects, so that uniformity of belief is impossible, as much as it is in size and looks, and in nothing is uniformity more divergent than in a conception of what to him seems to be god, for it is impossible to form an idea in youth that continues in maturity, unless that idea is planted and nourished in childhood, and continued to be cultivated till maturity is reached; and then when this instruction is withdrawn, other, and perhaps directly contrary instruction may be presented, so as to weaken that he formerly entertained, and if any suitable reasons are given to the mature mind, sufficient to convince him his early instruction was false and this new instruction is true, he may and very likely will abandon the false, and cling to the true; but that forms no reason why he should anchor his faith to this new view, for constant change in everything but nature's laws, is to be expected. The god of the ancient or primitive man, was in the outset an invention of the then most skillful intellect, who by reason of superior endowments, and the use of his weak reasoning faculties, and his inability to find any reason of a scientific kind, why his observed simple fact, that

water would run down hill, and always would refuse to run up hill, and many other like simple facts, he then contrived a supernatural force or an unseen, invisible being behind the water, to produce the motion, and behind the bent bow to cause the flight of the arrow in a given direction, where he had found an object which he wished to appropriate as food, or for other reasons, and this rude conception was so much above the ability of the average man to understand, he accepts this rude conclusion of the superior man, and in time, this process was gradually extended, so as to reach other, more intricate subjects, as the succeeding generations, gradually, by experience and observation, developed other more gifted intellects, till in still later times, there had become possible, a faint conception of a god began to be made visible, so that they were able to construct a rude supposed imitation of this god or supernatural agency, and thus in this way, finally became the god first conceived of, or invented, and since then he has received many improvements, by adding one attribute after another, such as power, wisdom, holiness, love, infinity, and hosts of other qualities, as man has by development become able to invent, till finally a limit beyond which the present development is not able to go has been reached.

This attainment was reached many thousand years ago, and since then nothing more real or sensible has appeared, and no description by modern theology, is able to impress a reality of conception alike, precisely, on any two minds; all is confusion, indefinite and unsatisfactory, but when any considerable number agree to a definition made by experts, who are chosen on account of their admitted ability to invent a system of doctrines or dogmas sufficiently numerous to be able and willing to employ a minister or teacher to instruct them and strengthen the system, however erroneous its authors know it to be, he dare not individually express any other view than the one so prescribed to which he has given his assent, for fear of losing credit as a teacher, and also because it would be an admission, that he had been not only imposed upon himself, and had himself imposed upon others, who had looked to him for true instruction, but also because it would cause him to lose his ability to procure a subsistence for himself and family.

Humanity as soon as it became able to think, which was not until many ages of gradual development had passed away, and that ability was realized by the mass of any tribe or people, has universally, by the extension of this process of false instruction as to a cause, or in other words as god, believed in something, beyond the finite or visible. This something, was by these masses considered to be suitable or appropriate to be called god, and worthy to be adored, revered, and worshipped as such; and therefore the theologian uses that, as certain or un mistake-



able proof that there actually is a god. So far very well, but let us not mistake a definition of the word, and insist that humanity has always believed in such, and such, a god, because, a belief in a personal supernatural god, formed only by our analogy in order to enforce the obligation to love this personal God, as we love our earthly parents. Many ages of time have been required to reach this conception or analogy, for not one word, as far as we know, was ever spoken about so advanced a conception, till Christianity after many hundred years of development, finally made this great discovery or mere invention, and that was required to distinguish Christianity from paganism, and was not a revelation at all, so it was consequently liable to be eventually not only considered, but actually proved to be fundamental error, and folly, because such love to an imaginary, unseen being as is given to a real known parent, is not only impossible, but absolutely unthinkable, except in individual, rare cases, and in such cases only imaginary. If an accurate idea of God is required of every one, it is the right not only, but the duty of every one, to fashion or imagine him after his own model. One may wish his god to be all love; another all hate; another all forgiveness, or pardon; another justice, and so on, till you have exhausted all conceivable qualities or attributes necessary to meet all emergencies, and concentrate such combination, into a supernatural, unthinkable nonentity; and then attempt to intelligently adore and worship this nonentity, for it can never be done any further than by unmeaning words, and postures of the body, intended to indicate reverence or humility, and call it worship, love, or fear.

Perfection cannot be more than imagined by mortals, and the most gifted can only imagine partial perfection, and when the powers of imagination have been exhausted, to try to conceive what perfection is as must belong to infinity, all we can say or that theologians can say is, that god is perfect whatever that may be, and man finite man is, and must always remain imperfect. Let no one imagine that because of the invented scene of the crucifixion of Christ, portraying the crucifixion with him of two thieves, who were falsely said to be crucified, for this low grade of crime which was not punishable with death under Roman law anyway, and were pagans, who never heard of Christ, till that lie of the gospel writers places them at his side, and had no more idea what, or who, Christ was, than the cross on which he hung, who this writer recites that he said "Lord wilt Thou remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," did not in the slightest degree understand what he was asking for, or without the one to whom he was applying having any idea what he wanted, when he promised him to be with him before that day was ended in paradise. I say let no one imagine that this whole lying

scene, was anything but an after thought to meet a theological emergency, that was encountered and had to be met later in the experience of the new religion; for Matthew says, both thieves reviled him; Mark and John say nothing about any penitence of one thief, when giving a full description of all that transpired, so that Luke simply invented this lie as he did afterwards, when he invented that book or fragment of our new testament, called the Acts of the Apostles, which contains more lies in that compass of words, than any other production on earth, to cover some extreme absurdity, that all that a dying man had to do to merit salvation through the atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ was, to just indicate a wish to be saved, strong enough to be willing to ask him to not forget to save him, when this was the end of a long life of scornful indifference, and may be of high-handed opposition to every Christian precept, and this foolish way of securing a home in heaven, was repeated by Luke in the case of the turnkey or jailor, who had charge of some holy prisoners, who did not escape when an earthquake had opened the prison doors; and this omission of these holy men to take their liberty, when divine aid had interfered to give them liberty, so wrought upon his weak mind, he asked them, what he must do to be saved, and was told all he had to do was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he, by that act would not only be saved, but he could include his whole family without their knowledge or wish to be saved, which Luke says he did and was saved; just as the dying thief was, but the thief had no family, and that was a far more simple and easy scene to invent for him.

What a stupendous scheme of humbug such an imposition makes possible, by a little farther ingenuity of later priests to profit by. Just think, vile wretch, whoever you are, and guilty of whatever enormity, a thousand times repeated, may be through a long life, at the verge of the grave, when society has been compelled in self defense to destroy your life, on the same principle, and for the same reason, that they would destroy a ravenous beast, or a venomous serpent, the priest comes to you, and offers you and urges you to rely on an unproved unreliable promise, made by an unknown authority, at an unknown time and place, that if you will only just believe on the fictitious Lord Jesus Christ, which neither he or any one else has the least reason to believe has ever lived on earth, or in heaven, he will be eternally saved in heaven, and for authority on which to base this worthless promise he will refer you to this thief, which was never on a cross, for the reason, that there never was any authority in Roman law to put him there for so slight a cause, and this farce is in actual use at the present day, in the most highly civilized Christian countries on the face of the earth, with not only the permission of the civil law, but it is also insisted on, as both a privilege

and a duty, of every variety of creeds among Christians, and is one of the foul blots on the foul page of priestly influence to perpetuate, and make permanent an imposition, having so respectable an origin.

It is a comfortable reflection, and one that reflects high honor on other nations than Christian, that this and many other outrageous farces of a like kind, are not permitted under any other system but the Christian, and these unheard of absurdities, constitute together or separate a foul, unnecessary blot, that disgrace both the system, and its apologists, makes it impossible for common sense when it can escape the contaminating influence of theology, to either approve or sustain this enormous farce called Christianity. The wise man is inclined, unless restrained by social or business complications, to at least think, if not act for himself, and admit or deny, as he sees best, all things considered, for prudence requires a conformity, at least an apparent one to the prevailing sentiment of the community among which his lot, without his choice is unalterably fixed, and he is not called upon except in widely separated emergencies, to adopt the role of reformer, for in even a neutral position he is made to feel he must openly take sides, for Christ has told the Christian fanatics in the gospel, that everyone who is not for me is against me, and unless you can be influenced by the priest to as much as pretend to favor Christianity, you are suspected and regarded as an open enemy of Christ, in proportion as your position, socially, or financially, makes your influence and assistance mitigate your indifference. An atheist is by that simple denial of god and devil, heaven and hell, released from all apprehension as to the future life, and is therefore a moral man, because merely and only that it is right for comfort and satisfaction in this life, on this earth, and if he is a vile wretch, and also an atheist besides, he is no worse off than the theist vile wretch is in this life, and unlike him, he is relieved from the fear and apprehension of both present and future punishment, which is a greater advantage than the unfounded hope of heaven by a death bed repentance can neutralize.

The priest tells you and me, that the death bed requires the dying person to have a religion. If I ask him which variety, he tells me mine; so when I fall sick, and feel myself enfeebled, my mind experiencing also in sympathy with my body a nervous excitability, an inclination to piety, if never before pious, and if a back slider, or an apostate, a return to piety, and have at the last breath said a penitent word, to comfort, it may be a friend, I leave behind, or a priest who will repeat such words and enlarge upon his success in rescuing a brand from the burning, such a process, when carried to its limit, is not worth the required bodily or mental effort to either the dying person or his associate. What a

deplorable, wretched condition every man is left in, who so far yields to a changed conviction, as to express to his former intimate associates such change, which in nearly every case results in not only isolating him from his own family, included in his own household, but also from his former religious family as well, when not the least change in his character or conduct is perceptible, but there is now manifested an indifference, and aversion when before such change, cordiality and toleration made his social condition satisfactory, and these and other like considerations not being ascertainable until the actual condition is met, does not have the restraining influence to cause that deliberation and hesitation, which his experience has taught him would have been preferable, and so when compelled to see those he best loves, as the best and purest minds on earth, look upon him, and actually regard him as impious, wicked, and forever damned, because this is imperatively demanded of them from the very necessity of their unfounded, silly faith, in nothing better than false orthodoxy, a fatal, wicked, cursed, damnable, invention, that is directly responsible for more misery, insanity, woe, and every vile consequence, than all other influences combined, a foe of peace and a direct cause of separation, whenever, and wherever introduced. And what right have the theologians to promise, or expect any other result, if, instead of holding up the Christian profession as a thing to be desired above and beyond every acquisition, they were to refer the anxious inquirer to what Matthew says, in chapter tenth, from the thirty-fourth to the thirty-ninth verse he would be sure to repel, and drive from the pursuit of the Christian life every candid person to whom such an alternative was presented, "Think not I am come to send peace on earth, I come not to send peace but a sword."

Why then does inspiration name you the prince of peace; "I am come to set a son at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," as if that result was not already likely to occur without such a cause as for one or both of them to be a Christian fanatic, a very strong reason why Christian fellowship should be avoided and despised by every right-minded person, as it inevitably would be if the child was permitted to have any choice in the matter, and universally is by all adult uninstructed persons when left alone by the priest.

Respectability is a great word, and has a great influence to attract weak minded and unprincipled people, and in every city or town of any importance, orthodoxy has secured so strong a possession by want of any opposition, that it is able to decide who, and what is respectable; and hence they uniformly decide themselves, the only ones who are entitled to that position in society, unless by so deciding they reject the



wealthy and generous among the naturals; who are included for these reasons to at least social recognition, but not to intimacy, unless after much priestly influence and persuasion they turn hypocrites, and join the church, for how can a man believe only what a child believes, or simply and only what a woman believes, or if you please reverse the simile, but the woman and the child join hands and demand, in the name of heaven, believe as we do or you will be damned, and the priest says, "Amen."

One day, at the foot of the altar, when a man in size, but a babe in religious experience, I said to the Christian's god, "I obey you, and surrender to your just demands." Before this, I had not much reflected; since this, I have reflected a great deal; at every point when I looked at that altar, doubt followed me. When afterwards I consulted science, the priest said it was a demon. These contrary conditions continued. What means this periodical observance of a rite called communion? Nothing. Experience told me as it unmistakably and uniformly tells every one who ever observed it. It told me, and it told them, that it was a mere empty device or invention; with an object to impress an abominable deception, for a ceremony whose original was never had, and therefore not required to be continued, and after further experience, examination, and reflection, I said, I have followed a wicked damnable lie long enough, I will abandon this miserable lie, and all its upholders, and apologists; now, I will seek for truth, and when I receive such proof as to the truth of any important proposition, as to me is satisfactory, and not before, I will seize it and hold on to it, so here I am writing this confession, without remorse or repentance; but with the isolation and separation referred to above. A few years at most will complete a life which has seventy-six years of duration, and I rejoice to leave on record for those of my successors, into whose hands these lines may come, the above testimony, as well as what follows.

I totally reject every belief I ever had that was founded on the Bible, as it is held by any sect of Christians or Jews, or in any supernatural religion whatever, or in any god, or in any devil as disclosed by any human discovery, or by my own perception, or in any future life as neither an object to be expected or desired, and I hope most earnestly, sincerely and tenaciously, that when I am compelled to encounter death consciously, and in anticipation, I may have the courage to adhere to these expressed beliefs, and if, on account of mental weakness, I give expression in oral language to any word inconsistent with the above, I may not be thought to have recanted so as to be considered among the saints in heaven, many who on earth deserved to be forever despised and shunned, and I further hope that any person to whose care and keeping these imperfect sketches, which but faintly and imperfectly

express my convictions, will preserve them and take them for a foundation, to rewrite, and revise, and add to them so as to make a volume, unique and valuable, and that I may thus, incidentally, be the means of undoing some of the evil, I have unintentionally done, before I came to this determination, by my example of supporting and advocating a false system, and teaching my children and Sunday-school children for many years to do the same, and if I should say anything inconsistent with such disclosures as I have made in any of these imperfect writings on a death bed, or in any other situation, when in danger of speedy death, my biographers are forbidden not to regard such utterances, as the result of delirium and of consequence, the result of disease or opiates. By far too many Christian lies are told about dying skeptics, recanting when too late, for no importance attaches to any utterance, whether of hope or despair, they are one and all of them without the least significance whatever.

The theological controversies of the period in which the writer of these lines has lived, have been carried on chiefly by those who are admitted on all hands to be as able men as are to be found among the adherents of two rival and opposite systems or views. The naturalist or materialist who rejects the theory of a personal creator or originator, who made all things visible and invisible out of nothing, in six days, which the believer in a supernatural originator has named god, but which he simply calls nature, and denies the way that creation is by the former said to have proceeded, has always demanded proof or demonstration from the supernaturalist, which in the nature of the case he cannot furnish, but he only can assume such and such to be the case, or true, because a certain pretended revelation has declared, that various observed results are due to this supernatural cause, which is only another assumption. There has always been, and there very likely always will be able men, to whom revealed religion will not commend itself, for the reason, that demonstration is in the nature of things which are required to be explained, impossible to be proved, and the portal of the mind through which conviction must come, which portal is the surrendering the reason to be guided by a supernatural assertion, is far too lowly for such a one who requires proof to enter, and therefore, if you eliminate or separate the supernatural or miraculous from Christianity, nothing of any value is left, for Christian morality is no better than any other kind of morality, and the stupendous vices that afflict, and are the invariable accompaniment of Christianity, are enormously more pernicious than can be found under any other system.

The miraculous conception of the Christians' Jesus, begins a train of many miracles, which finally and speedily ends in his death, resurrection,

and ascension, and if these things did not occur, but are only the unproved assertion of an unknown author, confirmed by several more unknown authors, who lived, nobody knows when or where, then this whole Christian system is a farce instead of a solemn reality, and when, after the most thorough and patient investigation has been made by the naturalist, to discover any confirmatory proof of these unfounded statements have been in vain, he is compelled to not only withhold his assent, but to deny vigorously and positively such statements, and it is therefore a duty which he owes to his associates not only, but to the world at large, to give such reasons as he has to them, also, for their benefit. It would at first sight appear a bold and hopeless task, for even an infidel, or any advanced grade of skeptic, to as much as doubt or call in question the reality of the foundation on which Christianity depends for its existence. Did any Christ, such as the gospel writers describe, ever live actually on earth, or is the Christ of these gospels imaginary or fictitious, the invention of a dramatic novelist of a long past age, when ignorance and superstition made deception and imposture easy, and successful? There is abundant evidence to which the most obdurate of the many skeptics will assent, that in order to invent or construct a new system, to supercede the old Jewish system, there lived in that age and country, at the alleged or supposed time when these books or fragments were written, a large, or comparatively large number of able writers, both of history and fiction, or poetry, and as none of these writers had anything better than traditions of a then long previous age on which to construct this new system, all that they wrote was an elaboration or extension of these traditions, in the form of dramatic or poetic fiction, having in its leading character or hero, as near perfection, as any being that was both divine and human should be, or in other words, as their conception of absolute holiness enabled them to invent, and the inferior or minor characters, as far removed from such perfection as could be conceived, so that the contrast was easily perceived.

However perfect the writers of the story made their hero in their own estimation, or that of their contemporaries from the then universally accepted standards of moral character, and however their immediate successors, who were all critical writers, or at least those which have come to our knowledge were, coincided to establish a basis on which to build the edifice, which by mutual and many concessions and alterations finally developed into Christianity, there is found to be by those who have had the experience and study of the fifteen hundred years that has intervened, an entire want of consistency or agreement, among the adherents or different varieties of Christian sects, so that none are to the other, Christian, more than in name; the separation of the Greek

from the Roman Christians, and their consequent renunciation of co-operation, or even fellowship in any sense, in consequence of their denying the authority of the Roman Pope or Pontiff, entirely. A further separation was made, when Martin Luther and others withdrew from the Roman church in the sixteenth century, and one later separation from the Luther faction, has so divided the first original imposition, that the controversies, and divisions, that the various scientific discoveries contradictory of the Bible, are when reinforced by the various grades of infidels, compelling the advocates of the truth of the Bible to make, will further weaken and ultimately uproot the whole unnecessary and worthless imposition, for true education, in any direction, is such as requires things such as the learner must give his assent to, to be as they actually are, and not merely as some one or more says they are, and being thus educated, we can distinguish what is actually true, and belongs to us, from that which is both false and incredible, and therefore does not belong to us, for there is only one endowment which is fully ours, and that is our will or purpose. How came we by this will? The supernaturalist says, God gave it to us. The naturalist says it is ours by inheritance, and therefore spontaneous and unavoidable, not to be restrained or thwarted by any power outside of ourselves, and no god of any system of theology can interfere with it, so as to either modify or control it, for nothing external, such as death, pain, exile, or any such thing, is in any case the cause of our acting, or not acting; and the cause is found simply and only in our own opinions, and in our judgments.

A certain English poet, by the name of John Milton, lived in England, in the middle of the seventeenth century, and secured an undeserved notoriety among his contemporaries. This contemptible, religious, fanatical vagabond, whose writings have been such a comfort and strength to orthodox Christianity, was, in his private life, one of the most if not the most contemptibly hateful men that England ever produced, and is so characterized by both his biographers, and the encyclopedians, which both assert that his young wife, or bride, discovered his hateful disposition before the marriage festivities were ended, so that she firmly refused to go to live with him, and this insult to his dignity, caused him to write a book against the existing laws of England, relating to marriage, which was entitled, "The doctrine and discipline of divorce, restored, to the good of both sexes;" to which he dared not affix his name as author, on account of the scandalous views he advocated therein; one of these declared emphatically, that the notion of a sacramental sanctity in the marriage relation was a clerical superstition, invented and put in practice by the priests, and laboriously argued the



point, that inherent incompatibility of character, or contrariety of mind between two married persons, is a perfectly just reason for divorce. Many other like absurdities which he was known to entertain, were in this book recorded, which finally led to the discovery, that Milton was the author, and he narrowly escaped prosecution. After he and his young bride had lived separate about two years, mutual friends interfered, and an outward reconciliation was effected, so that they came together in a hateful union, lasting about ten years, and in that time his numerous writings of a political character nearly sent him to the scaffold. It will be noticed that his views about marriage very nearly coincide with those held by most infidels, but in them it is held to be monstrous and criminal, but in a bigoted Christian if not condemned, it is excused or overlooked.

This hateful, religious vagabond, afterwards, when entirely blind, immortalized his name among the orthodox from that time to this, by dictating to one of his daughters, who served him against her will, as an amanuensis, or clerk, the scandalous poem, called "Paradise Lost," which was itself founded on a lie, and the lie consisted of the false accounts of the creation of the earth and its inhabitants, as it is found recorded in some of the first chapters of the Bible, of which this great or small poem as you may please to call it, is a mere paraphrase or repetition, in other words, than those in which it was first written, which, when you call it a lie, you give it a name none too strong, because any being more intelligent than a fool, ought to be able to know that such an origin was nothing better than theory or supposition, and clothing it with poetic nonsense in the way he did, was only strengthening the lie, but it helps the priests to, in a small degree, satisfy the people, who demand of them an answer to the question of how came we here? When came we here? and for what purpose came we here? A simple answer such as we don't know, or, it is of no consequence, would have satisfied for the most part those who made the inquiry, and no lie, such as this was required, for in the very nature of the case, these priests and their successors, have always been, and they always will be precluded, from the possibility of finding any evidence of the origin of man, or of matter, in any of its forms, so as to be able to testify, if they continue to ignore and abuse science, as much as any child is precluded from witnessing, or of giving testimony of its own birth. No supernaturalist can give as much as good or even probable circumstantial evidence, for it in all cases only rests on assertion or assumption, but nevertheless, weak and untruthful as it confessedly is, it holds both the Jewish and the Christian portion of mankind in a grasp, so tenacious, that, when science approaches them with unanswerable proof, that they are the victims of

deception and imposition, they look upon the scientist with contempt, and abhorrence, simply for the reason that his demonstrations contradict revelation, and revelation is not to be contradicted, because it emanates from God himself. Such an assumption if it rested on as much as probability, would have some value as an argument, but when nothing but the naked assertion can be produced, without the slightest proof, or even guess who made the assertion, or when it was made, or where it was made, no body having as much intelligence as an oyster has, ought to give the slightest heed to it. The occurrence of historical facts is not always capable of demonstration, but in all cases when the evidence that they happened, is of such a character as to render the idea that they did not happen in the highest degree improbable, enough is proved to justify its acceptance. Science, in many departments has not yet reached completion, but the discoveries already made in those yet in embryo, give strong reasons to expect, that further discoveries will be made, which will strengthen and establish what has been made in that branch, and when more complete experiments and discoveries have been made in such uncompleted sciences as chemistry, astronomy, physiology, and all the uncompleted sciences, furnish the opportunity of continuing, in the end, science will solve many, and perhaps most of the mysteries which are now met with, and which have thus far baffled and hindered a full explanation of many intricate phenomena. The sciences of evolution, of zoology, botany, and geology, are yet nearly new, and are being advanced with reasonable speed, considering that the church has always, and now does by sneers, and often of open warfare and opposition hindered all the sciences, from the earliest times to the present from reaching the advanced position in the estimation of those, who, were it not for religious scruples and bias, would be glad to, if not adopt, to at least investigate for themselves the teachings of science, as they are disclosed in any number of the most valuable works, in any branch of human knowledge.

There are in every civilized community, large numbers of well meaning, honest and candid persons, whose judgment and opinions are entitled to the utmost respect on account of this honesty and sincerity, who have imbibed, perhaps in early life, unavoidably from their training, by parents or otherwise, and cherished and strengthened this early received opinion or belief, that all questions relating to the origin of vital phenomena, are questions quite apart from the as much as right to enquire into; being by their very nature placed out of our reach, for these vital phenomena originated miraculously, or in some way totally different from the ordinary course of nature, and therefore they consider it not only useless, but absolutely presumptuous for man to as

much as wish to enquire into them, and for such a reason, regard not only scientists, but also science itself with a sort of holy scorn and pity, and complacently consider themselves entirely safe and sure, to cling to the anchor of revelation; and the priests cultivate and applaud such a disposition, for their own security as instructors, defenders, and interpreters of revealed truth so regarded, or pretended to be by them, depends on defeating all scientific inquiry, and fortifying the imposition they have always fastened as secure as possible upon these innocent and unsuspecting people.

No scientist the world has ever produced ever was, or ever can be made into a religious bigoted fanatic, or even a believer in anything supernatural, such as the so-called revelation is full of, and in all its allusions to any subject where accuracy of statement must be had, to entitle such statement to receive any credit, shows an entire want of even ordinary common sense, as in the case for example where the sun and moon received an order not a request, from a man, to stop and stand there, till he had completed the sanguinary slaughter of a few thousand more of his fellowmen, which, as the order was not obeyed, but only the lie is given that it was, no disaster was caused by such stopping, and every scientist unmistakably knows, that if the earth was to stop its revolution on its axis so as to prolong the day one instant, when the speed with which it revolves is a thousand miles an hour, would have caused by a sudden stop, not only the prostration of every object on its surface, but the earth itself, and likely the whole solar system would have been annihilated, and this result is not speculation, but scientific certainty, for the method of scientific investigation is nothing but the expression of the necessary mode in which the human mind necessarily acts, when it has been left free, or not permitted false instruction to paralyze its ability to act.

The chemist could never as much as begin any experiment, if he was compelled to use the scales that the grocer, or butcher uses, and which are sufficiently accurate for their purpose, but he must have a balance finely adjusted, and finely graduated, exact weights to perform a difficult and complex analysis. Not, however, for the reason that the scales in the one case, and the balance in the other, differ in the principles of their construction, or the manner of working, but the balance of the chemist, is set on an infinitely finer axis than the other, and turns by the addition of a much smaller weight. This illustrates, that there is no one of our surest convictions, which may not be at least modified, if not completely upset by a further accession of knowledge, and this knowledge may be acquired in some unexpected way, as for instance, the lately discovered science of evolution, when it reaches its limit, or ultimate



development, is sure to destroy the special creation hypothesis of the Bible, whose defenders fondly hoped was so fixed by the inspiration invention, as to be unassailable.

When we are ready to admit that the small word, matter, is comprehensive enough to include in its definition all that exists, and that its product mind can in some sense control matter, or cause it to change its mode of acting, we have just begun to understand the rudiments which precede the ability to comprehend all the further disclosures that follow further investigations of a mysterious subject, and accordingly, the naturalist has reasoned the origin of mind to be, in or from matter. All animate nature is endowed with a faculty, corresponding to what man has named his mind, or as some or may be all theologians say his soul, in a just proportion to their needs or requirements in the sphere wherein they move, and out of which they can never emerge, and beyond which they never aspire, but when some species by domestication, and association with the highest form of animal life, man, can be in some degree, by persevering effort taught, and developed, so as to show intelligence greater than any specimen of his kind in a wild state can. This result is reached when reached at all, by means of educating the young immature animal, when rescued from its wild associates, and the same animal, when unrestrained is led and governed by instinct. Nothing is weaker than a human infant, intellectually, and when born, and as soon as it is ushered into the atmosphere far enough to begin respiration, then, and not before, the faculty called mind, is by the act of inhaling its first breath of atmospheric air created, and started on a career of development, that never ceases till it no longer can be sustained by the breathing of the animal in which it has found a home, and that home, in all cases, is the brain, formed to be the home of the mental portion of the human organism, and that is the beginning of the intellect,, mind or soul, as you please to call it, in the human and all other animals, who have a brain, and according as it is cultivated in the human animal, in that ratio is it developed, till maturity is reached, without differing essentially in kind, in the various grades and species of animal life, but only in degree or ratio. Uniformity to receive and retain impressions, or the capacity to do this from surrounding conditions is never found; endless variety is everywhere met with, and this applies to, not only the mind, but also the body of every animal, causing an endless variety of results and conflicts of opinions on any given proposition, and makes it impossible, for any two individuals to precisely agree on any subject, and nothing seems more foolish, than for an inventor of any new system to expect to succeed in his endeavor to produce any more than an outward consent to such new proposition, for unless he takes the child, and



prevents any interference while the child is growing to maturity, and instructs his intellect, and in that way impresses the growing mental capacity so that the ability to get any other is always much weakened, and in most cases destroyed, and such is now and always has been the way, that every form of religious belief has been able to become established, so as to organize and form a system, and therefore any effort to assail or oppose such a system, results in poor success, on account of each organized form having an educated priesthood, and an ignorant rabble on which to live and thrive, and impose such monstrous absurdities as are, or seem to be required from time to time.

One of the worst if not the very worst impositions ever invented by that rascally set of men called priests, of both the Jewish, and Christian form or religion, the principal one on which they are both founded, and without which neither of them could ever have succeeded and these priests early perceived in the outset that they could not, is the old downright lie, as well as the unfounded and unsupported one, that the Bible, as a whole, and in all its parts is the inspired word of God, or in other words not less positive and emphatic, his revealed will, for they both agree in their conception of what god certainly is. Nothing better than one naked sentence or paragraph, has ever been offered as proof, that god ever authorized or instructed any one to write one word of this mess of worthless rubbish, which is by them referred to, and that sentence is in these words: "Holy men of God spake and wrote as they were moved by, or instructed by the Holy Ghost or Spirit." Who were, and what were, some of these holy men? One of the first, if not the very first, both in point of priority and in importance, was, "Moses;" Was he a holy man? That depends on what you mean by that word, holy. If you mean, as the word holy always means when used in scripture, free from sinful thoughts, affections and tendencies, or conduct, pure, irreproachable, or guiltless, he was as far removed from holiness, as the average of men of every age or country, if his character and conduct is correctly delineated in this Holy Bible, and his mistakes and contradictions are numerous and glaring, and he is perhaps the most prolific of all who are credited by theologians, as authors or writers. According to the above definition, was David a holy man, for he is another prolific writer of poetry, or psalms, which is the Hebrew name for poetry. Was Solomon, another prolific writer of Proverbs, and songs of an amorous nature, a holy man? for his character and conduct, as well as that of his father or his mother, comes far short of being worthy to be the vehicle or the agent, for a holy god to select and use, through or by whom to speak to universal mankind such words as would be regarded by them as inspired or revealed. These three are the most holy and

eminent men that can be named, as writers, both as regards the amount, and the value of what they wrote, and these have their characters, or the best parts thereof fully set forth.

The other writers are both unknown and too obscure to be entitled to be described, but it is a fair inference, that they are not any better than those are, about whom so much is told, Moses, David and Solomon. This word or adjective, "Holy," has been corruptly extended, and applied so as to signify every species of unholy mummeries, or observancies of the Christian church, more especially that division called the Roman Catholic, such as holy water, holy alliance, holy office, meaning the inquisition, the most horrible unholy institution ever devised by man, holy Thursday, holy week, holy Sabbath, holy Bible, and hosts of others. It is therefore a just conclusion, that if nothing is inspired except what holy men have written, as you perceive that word holy must be defined, there is no such thing as a written revelation, on which to found any system of religion or even morality, for if you define morality to mean such vile conduct as these noted Bible writers practiced, it would be of as low an order as any savage tribe ever practiced. This idea or even the word inspiration is not exclusively Christian; all the varieties of pagans have had their inspired speakers, and also writers; and the Christians coming later on the stage, have simply adopted pagan ideas, to intensify the imposition they were about to introduce, with the intention and hope, to be able to found a new system to supercede paganism, because these ambitious and aspiring first impostors, were not able to find sufficient scope and opportunity to operate successfully, in a long established and declining imposition, as the Jewish had become about two thousand years ago, when a pagan or Jewish poet, orator or a philosopher and prophet, was called inspired, when he only differed from other men because of a special faculty or endowment, by which he was able to impress the ignorant rabble, so as to become famous. The classical languages are full of words and phrases which express the idea of inspiration, and they have been adopted by Christian theological writers, and used to describe what Jewish and Christian divines have called inspiration, but the Christian places a slightly different meaning to that put on the word by the Jew or pagan, but one no better or more expressive. The pagan and Jewish notion of inspiration (for the whole idea or word by whoever it is used is nothing but a notion) related to the condition of the one, who for the moment was in the trance or in a hypnotic state. Whereas the Christian was only concerned with the result of what the one who was in this hypnotic state or condition disclosed while he was in that state or trance, as we now call it, for we have individuals in as great numbers with us who are

experts in this same inspiration business, who are as, and perhaps more gifted, to reveal the divine will as any that have ever existed; consequently the Christian theology only takes account of the supposition or implicit, unquestioned belief in the theory, that God has, only through means of these inspired or holy men, who he caused when in this hypnotic or trance state to put in writing his thus revealed will, so that men might have it permanently, fully and infallibly in a true and trustworthy way so that is reduced to this simple form in these words.

In the Bible, all men can have and all who have the Bible do have god's revelation, wholly committed to writing, and this has been written out under the special guidance and direction, of almighty God, and it is impossible for him to authorize or permit any error. If such a theory, (for it is only a theory) could be established then, the Bible would be what these theological impostors, not to say liars, assert it is entitled to great attention, but otherwise it should be entirely neglected, and not only so, but these arch impostors, who teach men this abominable fraud, should be held up to scorn and loathing unutterable, for daring to aid and abet this imposition, when these leaders and teachers know it is that and nothing else. When the objector or skeptic, if you please to so designate him, inquires of the schoolmen, or in other words of the theological professor, why it was necessary for almighty God to communicate to the world the long histories, the tables long and tiresome of genealogies, and the scandalous conduct of some of these most holy men of old, whose moral character would disgrace modern society to such an extent, that they would be social outcasts, when such disclosures did not contain one doctrinal precept, or give the slightest guide to holy living, you will be told by these holy villains, that all this is allegory, for it is useful for you to know, that allegory, will turn the dryest details of scandalous conduct into a moral code; and such answer, although not satisfactory to the skeptic, is considered satisfactory by the student who receives instruction from the rascally professor, or has been so considered till very lately, when some doubt has found an entrance into some minds. He is further told, that there are two kinds of inspiration, the direct and indirect. The former, teaches directly doctrinal and moral truths, and the latter teaches that the doctrinal and moral precepts can only be indirectly evolved by the use of allegorical interpretation. All these and many more theories like these, but if possible, more absurd and monstrous, were held and taught to all those who aspired when young to become priests, and rigidly enforced upon all priests who took orders up to the time of the reformation, by one Martin Luther, and later others of whom he was leader, who had broken loose from the Roman church, and they then reformed in some sense the theory of

inspiration, as well as many other important matters, but did not improve, but only changed the form. They held and established, and ever since have taught in their theological colleges, that the main reason why the scripture was inspired by the direct influence of the holy spirit or spirit of God was, that it not only made a touch stone in religious controversy, but also that it being the divine word of God it thus became a sword of the spirit, to pierce the heart and conscience of as many simple fools as they or, their successors, might persuade to come under their pernicious instruction.

A vast amount of such unmeaning theological twaddle as the above has ever since the reformation been added to theological controversy, mainly for the purpose of sustaining some trifling discrepancy, so as to make an excuse or apology for some new sect, which in its ramifications of details it is unprofitable to try to describe; but enough has been disclosed to convince any candid and unbiased mind that it is all the merest rubbish, not worth a minute's worry or even the slightest notice, in any other way, but to estimate the vast needless expense and burden it is, to be borne almost wholly by those who are without this burden, hardly able to subsist on the most meagre fare, for it is impossible to get even an approximate estimate of the vast aggregate, but it is within bounds to say, that the worthless systems of religion that have always cursed the world, have cost more than all other expenses combined. The principal reason why the idea or theory of the inspiration of the Bible was and is insisted on, is that it was considered to be of the first importance, that the most absolute uniformity of belief must in some way be had, and so, of course a universal, unquestioned assent to inspired revelation, must produce such uniformity. This was found on trial to be an enormous fatal error. The inventors of this scheme miscalculated, or failed to perceive, that uniformity in any direction either in mind or matter, would be a direct impossibility, for no two grains of sand, no two leaves of the forest, or no two of nature's productions were precisely alike, and therefore, compulsion or force must be used, to produce sufficient harmony to prevent the diabolical scheme from a premature collapse; so, in order to justify the application of such force, and compel those who had once, by reason of the use of the most persuasive eloquence, as some of the most able of the learned clergy, who by the way were almost the only class of men of that age, who were permitted to have access to learning, were so over-persuaded by such plausible arguments, as to give an outward consent to become identified with the organization of Christians, and be put through the initiation required to join such church organization, and without suspecting that by so doing or consenting, they were to be prohibited



through life from changing such belief, which had been forced upon them by false teaching, in consequence of receiving other impressions from other teaching which conflicted with that they at first received, so as to convince them it was only error. The experience of the first two hundred years of this new imposition, satisfied the impostors who invented this Christian humbug, that they needed further protection to prevent its entire collapse and dissolution, which was seen to be inevitable, unless some addition to this imposition could be made, so the leaders got together in council, and after much deliberation and many mutual concessions, to prevent disintegration, agreed upon the system which every previous form of religion had adopted called theology, a crude, imperfect system at the outset, but which after various alterations and additions, finally developed into a science; so satisfactory as to seem to need no further change, which was called, first, the science of Christian faith and life.

This first system, only sought to adapt itself to the capacity of the Asiatic civilization, and to an undeveloped knowledge of scripture teaching, which had not yet assumed the form it afterwards reached, when the epistles of the apostles, and the gospels of the evangelists were invented, written out, and gathered into the form of revealed or inspired truth, called now the new testament. These writings, by unknown authors, were undoubtedly fictitious or imaginary, a pure invention, as much as any writing of that dramatic and sensational character is that has since then been put upon the market; a mere after thought, required to try to satisfy such, as otherwise would have apostatized and gone back to paganism; but this device did not, and it could not prevent the disruption of the church into many warring factions, one of which claimed to be genuine, and therefore decreed all the others to be spurious, and these in turn, combining in the form called the Greek Christian Catholic Church, have always and do hold the Roman church to be spurious, and the Protestant church holds them both in contempt as anti-Christ, consequently spurious, and other or pagan religious forms, embracing and including more than two-thirds of the human race, regards them all as not only spurious, but worthless, and this writer who records these statements, is thoroughly satisfied, that every form of religion, pagan, Mahometan, Jewish, or Christian, is, was, and will be as long as they exist, not only spurious and worthless, but also pernicious, and nothing better than fraud.

It is to be observed with reference to theology, that notwithstanding its inventors, and its defenders claim it to be a science, that it is not a science; for if it were it would be capable of demonstration which it is not, and never will or can be, for all grades of intelligence among the

most able scholars, differ as much on that branch of learning as any other; for while it is possible to teach science and not be obliged to resort to controversy to defend it, it is impossible to so teach theology, and that makes it to be necessary, for every division or sect of Christians, to have separate theological seminaries, in which to educate such students as come to them, and satisfy them that they wish to be instructed, and when considered competent, they wish to advocate and uphold such doctrines as that particular sect had invented, and also defend by such acquired capacity against all others, these worthless doctrines.

The word theology is derived from the greek "Theo" meaning god, and the latin logos, meaning logic, and therefore means god logic, or logic of or about god, and basing it all on a mere assumption that there is a god, which they do not as much attempt to prove, and then by logic, argue and mystify, analyze and analogize, and finally systematize, or organize, into a system or form, as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and what not. In the outset of the invention of theology, the Greeks and Romans could not distinguish between nature and revelation, or between reason and faith, in their distinctive, or in a Christian sense. The natural theology came into reputation notwithstanding the opposition of those who have always denied its existence, and therefore it contended that reason of itself alone, can teach us absolutely nothing about God, or our duty in reference to him. This is the kind of theology adopted by the old or pagan religions, and of course must be modified and altered to conform to a new standard, and so many and great difficulties were met with, and so much controversy indulged in, that no uniform system was realized till about the seventeenth century, when the present or comparative theology, took the place of natural theology in so far as adaptation to Christianity was concerned, but a distinction has in recent times been made, as to the true mode of study or investigation of comparative theology; one class insisting that theology is the science of god only, and the other, that it is the science also of religion. This latter view is now most commonly being received and taught in orthodox seminaries, on the supposition that it is impossible to obtain or acquire any definite knowledge of god, but the objector for the reason that the word religion is ambiguous, or capable of many definitions, therefore is of a doubtful application, and also that to define theology as the science of religion, makes theology entirely independent of the Bible, so that this continual hair-splitting controversy, about mere non-essentials, is interminable, and irreconcilable, as well as nonsensical, for what difference to the average man can be realized, whether one or the other is preferable, or whether both are spurious; it is only a mere device of a

theologic expert, to so throw dust in the eyes of those from whom he draws a good, fat living, without rendering any valuable service, that no conclusion can ever be reached, and in this way the deception be made perpetual.

The absurdity of trying to build a theological structure on the god of the Bible is plainly apparent, when it is shown that it reveals nothing, to establish the existence of any god, except what nature alone reveals, because in revealing god to any human conception, his counterpart or the devil must also be as plainly revealed, and also be allowed to assume personality, eternity, infinity, and every other attribute, that you ascribe to deity, and have theology in reference to him definite and intricate as you have in reference to his counterpart, for they are alike associated in opposition to each other, and are in eternal conflict, and undetermined supremacy, and they occupy equal prominence in all human experience, as delineated in history, and also in pretended revelation, and can never be separated in individual, or in national experience. In order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, as to whether theology as such, or by itself alone is a science, or only speculative absurdity, it is of the first importance to understand what we mean by science, when used in connection with religion, for it is nothing short anywhere of absolute, or undoubted certain true knowledge, in its purest form, and it is therefore clear, that theology can never even claim to be more than probable in any of its aspects, or pretensions, for it is clearly nothing but a mere speculative absurdity, instead of a true science, so that it is no wonder that uniformity is as far from being reached after the controversies of nearly two thousand years, as it was at the first attempt to introduce it to refute paganism; and it must always so remain, for it is only a few specialists, who are of a peculiar mental structure, who ever even attempt to write about or to teach theology, and those who are instructed in the most thorough course of four years' discipline, are only thereby provided with an expensive and useless weapon, with which they hope to defend their statements, when such statements are attacked by minds uneducated in theology, but who, instead, have the gift of reason, to perceive that truth is independent of either theology or science, and must be discovered by the reason alone, for the natural theology which the naturalist or materialist receives directly, comes from the works or manifestations of natural phenomenon, and science has reached in many directions to demonstration, and in many others to a more advanced position than probability, but still short of certainty, so that reason is holding judgment in suspense, till demonstration is reached.

No such process is had by comparative theology, for it receives as truth, what the reason refuses to admit, and thus so far subordinates



reason to revelation, that, where it is in conflict, reason is never allowed to prevail, to question or doubt revelation, even where miracles are recorded, which reason always rejects when not silenced by fear, which fear is the direct result of false instruction. It always has been one of the most deplorable conditions of universal humanity, that it has been tyrannized by a set of vile, religious impostors, whose chief business has been, to prevent the spread of scientific knowledge among one another, as well as among the people, and while the priests shamelessly boast of great progress which Christianity has enabled those nations to make, who have assumed the name of Christian, this boast is always unfounded and untrue, and the exact reverse is true, for the ecclesiastical authority, was at the outset of the consolidated and thoroughly organized Christian body called the church, so tenacious of its authority, and watchful over its dupes, that no conflicting idea, that in the most distant manner could be construed to weaken the hold the priests had secured on the people, hence men who in addition to their seeming devotion to religious matters, were naturally inclined to pursue investigations into natural phenomenon, and find some satisfactory explanation of observed natural operations, and such inquiries resulted in modifying their belief, to the extent of doubt as to the veracity of the teaching of the priesthood, but if so, he was quickly silenced and made to abandon his investigations, or be himself destroyed, as well as all his writings; and all progress in learning other than such as the monks imparted, was sternly and strictly forbidden, for many hundred years, thus entirely preventing any advance in science of any kind, which did not reach its climax till the fifteenth century, when the inquisition, which was but a continuation and expansion of a similar endeavor and determination of the church authorities of the Latin or Romish church, to produce absolute uniformity of belief, which first began operations in this direction in the twelfth century, when the Albigensian heresy was stamped out, by the most vigorous persecution, accompanied by much torture and slaughter, for heresy, or, daring to adopt a different way of explaining scripture. This monstrous, diabolical, religious and Christian deviltry, received the meek and inoffensive name of Holy Office, and innocently pretended in the outset, that it only proposed to make a mere inquiry, into a suspected case, with a view to discover, and correct, or eliminate error, so as to restore the wayward, and thus prevent apostacy, merely for the benefit of the individual suspected, when its real purpose was, as it was afterwards disclosed and made plainly evident, to so terrorize by their atrocities, sanguinary and bloody methods, every species of heresy or deviation from prescribed standards, that no person, whether high or low, would dare to differ with any monstrous tyranny the church



might decree to exercise, when reinforced by the civil power. Any one can learn by referring to secular, as also to church history that the inquisition as it appeared in the fifteenth century, about fourteen hundred and eighty, was a gradual development, whose aim and ultimate object was, to not only compel uniformity of belief, by those who were or who professed to be Christians, but also to compel the Jews, or Moors, or Mahometans, to adopt Christianity, with the alternative of doing so, or be exterminated or driven from their homes, and have their property confiscated, besides compulsory torture in case of their neglect or refusal to embrace Christianity, and the secular power was used, in connection with the church, to do this devilish work on a large scale, as will appear before this description is completed, and no page of the most savage and degraded race, whose history was ever written, can be found, that will for a moment compare in atrocious villany, with those on which is written the diabolical, devilish history of this inquisition, or Holy Office, as it existed in the last twenty years of the fifteenth century, when the genuine, simon pure, unadulterated Christian, had both the power and the hellish disposition to act out what was in him, at least, partially, which was a determination to compel, if possible, all the world to be governed by this tyranical priesthood or perish.

This first attempt miscarried, or was but partly successful, but such an enterprize and determination has never been abandoned, and will be renewed on a large scale, when what has so far been done will appear insignificant. when the favorable time comes, which is impatiently waited for, and eagerly expected by that devilish, corrupt, unholy organization, the Roman Catholic Christian Church, who are now as hopeful and confident of final victory as they ever were. When that most infernal Christian Spanish villain, Thomas of Torquemada, took the office of inquisitor general, from that other and greater infernal villain, Pope Sixtus, the fourth, he proceeded to fully organize the methods, by which the results he and his devilish associates expected were to be secured, for the scheme was to proceed in at least an outwardly, lawful manner. Two eminent lawyers were secured as assessors, and these to act as counsellors, but practice soon demonstrated that this insignificant scheme was far too small, for so magnificent a system of robbery and plunder, as well as murder, as was by these holy fiends contemplated, for it must not be lost sight of, that this wretched villainous scheme, was concocted and put into operation by the highest dignitaries, such as Pope and Cardinals, and when this discovery was made, a reorganization was had, which then included a central court, composed of the grand inquisitor general, six apostolic counsellors, a fiscal procurator, three secretaries,

a head or chief policeman, one treasurer, four servants to wait on the court, two reporters or informers, and as many counsellors as might be found needful, after this complicated religious machinery was put into operation.

Besides this central court at Rome, where this august tribunal was to be located, four others of like proportions, called local tribunals were organized. All these officials were to be well paid out of the confiscation fund, which was a stream of wealth, that was never to be permitted to run dry, or even to diminish its abundant flow, from this unholy source so named, and considered by these holy robbers. The crowned head, or chief holy devil, Ferdinand, king of Spain, and the she devil, Isabella, the queen, were to have the largest share of the spoils, and Rome, or the church was to have the rest of the plunder. This nest of holy robbers and murderers, next proceeded to make rules, which, consisted of thirty-nine articles or divisions, which made the code of laws or regulations on which this meek, innocent, harmless holy office, were to proceed and did proceed, in short order in fact there was no interruption, while this change was being made. From section one to ten was the summons, or warning to the heretics, which included all not enrolled as Christians, in good standing or unsuspected; from section eleven to thirteen, had reference to penitents who were in prisons, waiting for torture, with a view to extort recantation of heresy, or to compel acceptance of Christianity by the Jews, and Mahometans, who were then in Spain, in vast numbers, who, as before stated, were offered this alternative or extermination and confiscation. Sections fourteen to nineteen, described the form of trial including torture; sections twenty and twenty-one, established jurisdiction over the wealth of dead heretics and living nobles, and their vassals or servants. The remaining eighteen sections related to such unforeseen details as might be required, when this complicated machinery, emanating from this corrupt nest of holy inventors and constructors was put into actual operation. When this infernal scheme, the concoction, or invention of the Holy Office, was published, and put into circulation, so that those immediately concerned were aware of its nature and requirements, all who came within its description or designation, were terrorized, and why should they not be.

A body or jury, a hundred in number, who were drawn from various monasteries, and were selected on account of their eminence, or reliability to convict those who were brought before them, sat as judges to decide the fate of such culprits as were brought before them, for preliminary examination, to ascertain whether there was sufficient reason for interference, which in nearly every case there was found to be. They were then examined, and also all the informers and witnesses, with-

out the accused having any counsel, every suspicious circumstance, which holy zeal could rake together was drawn out, and submitted to this body or jury of monastic theologians, called the Qualifiers of the holy office, whose characters were involved, so that they must invariably decide again the accused, or their own orthodoxy would be suspected. As soon as their decision against the accused was given, he was at once removed to the sacred prison of the holy office, when all communication with the outer world was cut off. Next came to him the holy confessors, to if possible wring a confession out of him, giving him three separate audiences, or opportunities of recantation, so that he might be, if so disposed, included among the penitents, if, however, he prove obstinate or firm in his refusal to recant, or to embrace Christianity, as the case might be, the first charge was renewed and torture was ordered, whose object was to extort a confession or acceptance, as the case might be, by the most ingenious and horrible instruments of torture, the world has ever been able to contrive, and which it is absolutely impossible to exaggerate. After this holy sport had been indulged in to the verge between life and death of the victim, his shattered body, and relatively shattered mind, was carried into the audience chamber, and called on to answer to the charges, which were now read to him by a holy monk for the first time. He was then next asked whether he desired to make any defence, if he did, he had to choose a lawyer from the list of those employed by his accusers, so that any such a defence was a mere mockery, and nearly always resulted in a conviction; when the victim was immediately remanded to prison in most cases for many months, waiting for sentence, or for rich relatives or friends to ransom him, at a fearful cost. If no such ransom was made, then the imprisoned victim was brought for sentence, before these holy Qualifiers, from which he might make, if he could produce a sufficient sum of money, a useless appeal from the local tribunal, to the supreme central one at Rome, if money was sent in advance in sufficient abundance to pay the price, because the papal treasury expected, not without reason, to realize an enormous sum by these useless appeals, and by this process, the inquisition also got all the victim's property by confiscation, and the pope got a large share of the wealth of his friends, by listening to the appeal, which as before stated, was unsuccessful, except in very rare cases.

When, however, an acquittal was thus secured, the accused were permitted to slink home, without redress or recompense, for his unjust imprisonment, or for the agony inseparable from such a trial, and cruel torture. On the other hand, if convicted, the victim was made the center of an auto da fe, or jollification, by these Holy Office authorities, who decked him out in a condemned man's robe, and after sufficient

hilarity to satisfy these holy loafers had been indulged in, they all proceeded to the place of execution, when for the first time his sentence was read to him, and the choice given him, either to be reconciled to the church, and submit to the penances they prescribe, which were little short of death, or be handed over to the secular arm for burning, for, the Holy Office, shed no blood only indirectly, and the secular arm to which was attached the bodies of the two chief devils of this holy gang, the King Ferdinand, and Queen Isabella, of Spain, who with their devilish holy successors, have put to death, after the most previous unmerciful torture, from the date of fourteen hundred and eighty-four, to the date of eighteen hundred and nine, by the holy merciful way of execution, known as burning alive at the stake in public, the vast number which would be incredible if it could not be in the most satisfactory manner proved by history, of thirty-one thousand nine hundred and twelve. In effigy, or an imitation, who represented those who recanted after torture, imprisonment, and confiscation of their property, which was not enough, the holy sharks must humiliate them still further, by burning in a public place an imitation or wax representation of this person who recanted, or accepted Christianity, from among the Jews, or Mahometans, to avoid exile from thir homes, and friends, seventeen thousand, six hundred and fifty-nine. Those who were merely imprisoned for life, after undergoing torture, imprisonment and confiscation, as penitents, who were compelled to endure such privations and humiliations, that mere life was of little value, were two hundred and ninety-one thousand, four hundred and fifty, making in all the vast aggregate of three hundred and forty-one thousand, and twenty-one, who were thus disposed of in Spain alone, in consequence of not being willing, or able to see the logical speculation and absurdity, as these ungodly tyrants of the mind, who have always ruled the Christian church, as they pretended they saw it, and this stupendous fact must be kept in mind, that these holy murders, perpetrated by such infamous means, include some of the best individuals of both sexes, who have ever lived on earth. But ghastly and incredible as this chapter of horrors is, it is not yet 'a tenth part of the whole, for no country except Spain, ever kept any record of these damnable proceedings, which in Portugal and France, were on the same scale of horrible atrocity, and on a smaller scale, yet horrible enough to sicken the historian. England, Germany, and other European countries, have all felt the unmerciful infliction of cruelty, by which the holy church has been able to strengthen, and continue its horrible impositions.

Another horrible record is yet to be added to the one above described, which while not so revolting in some of its aspects, is still



odious enough to forever damn, the whole Christian church, if this alone was all the crimes of which it is guilty, and make it unworthy to exist a moment longer. In the year fourteen hundred and ninety-two, the same year that Columbus discovered America, which is four hundred years ago, the same holy Ferdinand, and his Queen Isabella, for she must be included, as she was the real king, expelled a vast number of Jews and Mahometans from Spain, and confiscated all their property, and sent them wandering in enormous crowds of paupers, on all the shores of the Mediterranean sea, carrying the plague, as well as starvation, and every kind of misery, in their train. A few years later, another exodus of Moors or Mahometans, who had ventured to come into Spain in ignorance of the edict for their expulsion, took place. The order was promulgated, for them either to leave the country, or embrace Christianity. A small part of them were Christianized or pretended to be, but after suffering an untold, horrible persecution during the sixteenth century, they were finally in the year sixteen hundred and nine, all expelled, so that from Spain alone, there was sent off over three millions, of the wealthiest and most intelligent inhabitants, entailing a loss in trade, agriculture and manufactures incalculable, and reducing the population of Spain over four millions, all to gratify a mere handful of fanatics, who had the impudence to call themselves Christians, but were not so in any sense but the name.

The advance made in learning, in the last two hundred years, in spite of the determined and persistent opposition of the highest church authorities, has gradually destroyed the power for evil of the inquisition, and so crippled its administration, that it has not dared to do more than desire to exterminate heresy, but the same ancient, intolerant, fanatical spirit, the most hateful of any that is possessed by any class of the human race, still animates all Christians in their highest ecclesiastical authorities, whatever their designation, and when the human race is rid of them, and of every other kind of religious humbug and deception, a great advance in every direction will soon be perceptible, but when we consider what an enormous aggregation, fanaticism, ignorance and superstition is yet concentrated in every species of religious humbug, how firmly and cunningly they are organized and disciplined, by the most able and shrewd rascals called priests, to be found in any of the learned professions, who are banded together for self-defence and self-protection, whose whole study is, how to make this imposition, perpetual, little hope can be indulged in that much change will be perceptible in the next century, but still on looking back a hundred years, and comparing the position the church then occupied, and the abhorrent doctrines that were then boldly preached, and what intolerable theological

tenets were taught, and how firm the Bible was on all hands, then supposed to stand, on the firm rock of inspired revelation, a hundred years ago, and then comparing the timidity and hesitancy of the priests, to publicly, even allude to many of such doctrines as were considered necessary to be upheld and enforced, such as the atonement, endless hell fire for the damned, election or predestination, infant damnation, and many other like these, which no priest dare even mention, and giving the skeptic the credit, he is entitled to, as being the main cause of this change, and also when we consider that it is the tendency of the human intellect to go to the opposite extreme, when doubt takes the place where faith once stood, and it forbade doubt to as much as find or search for a weak spot in or by which to operate, there is abundant reason to expect, that the progress of infidelity, will increase; especially as the foundation of inspired revelation is fast growing weaker, and must soon entirely sink in the quick sands on which it stands, and if this imperfect writing shall fall into the hands of any person, to aid such result, my reward is sufficient.

Nothing has been disclosed thus far in the partial delineation of some, only of the horrors of the inquisition, for the reality far exceeds any power of language to describe, about the immense slaughter by an infuriated mob of holy Christians, who, by direction of the Holy Office, deliberately planned and perpetrated the sanguinary scenes of St. Bartholomew's day in France, when more than ten thousand, as good men and women, and as good Christians as those were by whom these were murdered, had to die for the mere want of uniformity of religious belief, and hundreds of thousands have been driven from homes and country, simply, to, by that holy process, produce uniformity or unquestioned acquiescence in any scheme of robbery and villany the Christian hierarchy choose to adopt, such as selling indulgences, or license to those who had plenty of money, and plenty of desire to ravish female virtue and chastity, or any other species of drunken debauchery that such rich vagabonds could desire to perpetrate, and this money so assessed and collected, was added to the other enormous sums, to swell the treasuries of the church, and to terrify the wavering and make it so dangerous to doubt, or question any monstrous iniquity the highest ecclesiastical authority thought proper to authorize. Those who ordered this outrage, and many other like this, but not on so large a scale, took also the wealth of these slaughtered victims, to pay for the trouble of exterminating them, as well as of those who they drove into exile, and this process has been till quite lately the main reliance of the Holy Roman Catholic church in all its history, and the chief source of its enormous wealth.

In speaking or writing about any system that has so wide a scope

and so many ramifications as Christianity has, it is necessary to distinguish and separate to some extent one branch from another. What has preceded in this book has had reference to those, the most familiarly known, as the two great divisions, called Romanism and Protestantism. The Greek division has scarcely been referred to, but it must not be overlooked, for it, like its twin humbug, Romanism, is a large, powerful imposition, perhaps not so widely distributed, but not so intimately associated with Protestantism, as Romanism is, for it never had as many horrible atrocious outrageous features, such as the Spanish inquisition, Jesuitism, and that infernal contrivance, the sale of indulgences, which has made Romanism so odious in the estimation of universal humanity. It never had any pope to whom infallibility was ascribed, or a celibate priesthood to make the creation of nunneries a positive necessity. but their priests, like the people at large, had both wives and legitimate children, and none of the disclosures of obscene immorality that have been made by escaped nuns, to the outside world, causing the formation of such political combinations, as know nothings, or the A. P. A. have ever been known among the Greek Christians, and it must be admitted that if Romanism had not been both charged and proved to have been guilty of these enormous vices, she would never have been disrupted by the so-called reformation, but would have, instead, been able to so reconcile the unimportant theological disputes that originally caused the separation as to become again united, but Romanism is as hateful to the Greek as Islamism is, and for the same reason a fixed determination of the Roman church to never yield any of its abominable pretensions or practices in remote times, and up to the time when "Vladimir," the first Russian ruler, who had embraced Christianity, introduced it into that country in the Greek form. The aboriginal "Finns" were supplied with a form very simple, and satisfactory, which in time they, partly from choice, and chiefly by compulsion, abandoned for the present form, and which has become national. They could not distinguish between religion and magic rites, and had never been taught that other religions were less true than their own. This was an imperceptible mixture of paganism and Christianity, and to show a specimen of their simplicity and candor one of their prayers is inserted.

"Look here, O, Nicholas, God, perhaps my neighbor, Michael has been slandering me to you, or perhaps he will do so. If he does don't believe him. I have done him no ill, and wish him none. He is a worthless boaster, and babbler. He does not really honor you, and merely plays the hypocrite, but I honor you from my heart, and behold I place a taper before you." Was there ever constructed a more simple and satisfactory prayer than this, by the most gifted expert, each like the other wholly worthless and vain?

The people of this land of liberty, and universal intelligence, or the means to become intelligent, can have but a faint conception of the people of Russia, whose condition is directly the reverse in these respects. This country is the home, and its sovereign the head of the Greek church, in the same sense as Turkey and its sovereign is of the Mahometan or Islamism. After various experiments were tried to keep the church supplied with priests, it was found that the Jewish plan of recruiting priests from the sons of priests was the most feasible and satisfactory, and for many hundred years it has been in operation, and has resulted in degrading the priestly office to such an extent, that on account of the excess of supply beyond the demand, by reason of the law forbidding the sons of priests entering any other calling, so that in time a priestly caste was developed. This caste so increased in numbers by the process of reproduction, that the supply of priests and deacons far exceeded the demand, and every year this disproportion became greater and greater, so that a large company of priests were always out of situations, and they gravitated towards the large towns, in hopes of being hired to officiate in the private chapels of the rich nobles, who sent out their servants to hire them, and such was the competition for employment, and such the extremity of their poverty, that only those who were the most fortunate were able to secure these situations, and the result of this system has been, and still is to curse the nation by obliging them to receive their religious instruction from an ignorant set of boobies, whose only qualification to instruct is the consecration by a bishop nearly as ignorant, and stupified as themselves, hence the ceremonies were all that were insisted on as of consequence, such as Easter and the fasts of Lent, and numerous others, including three weeks in June, from the first of November till Christmas, and on all Wednesdays and Fridays of the year, and they teach their dupes, that in making the sign of the cross, they can only use the two first fingers of the right hand, and not add the thumb, for that would indicate a belief in the holy ghost, making the trinity, which, on no account must be included in the creed. It is perhaps proper to notice that on this trinity doctrine there was a division, which developed so as to cause an extensive schism in the beginning of the reign of Peter the Great, near the close of the 17th century. This division has never been healed, so that dissenters are nearly as odious to the orthodox Greeks as the Protestant dissenters were and are to the Roman or Latin church.

The enormous wickedness that has been above recorded, and which can all be proved by history, and twice as much more besides this in reference to the Christian church as an organization, while it largely applies to that branch called Roman Catholic, and to that chiefly



before the reformation inaugurated by the reformer Luther and his associates and successors, who are all the bitter enemies of that mother church does not include, as has been stated, a tenth, or a hundredth part of the known corruption and rascality, of that wretchedly, ungodly nest of vile scoundrels of the various three hundred popes, who, one after another have sat in the chair of St. Peter at Rome, down through all grades of priests, till the ignorant, and for the greater part of honest and unsuspecting dupes of these designing, infamous devils in human form are reached. These infamous hypocrites justify their ungodly acts of robbery and deception, on the ground of necessity and a disinterested anxiety for not only their spiritual welfare, but also as an auxiliary of the civil power, as an assistant in preventing the commission of crime, and preventing poverty, so as to cause the lower orders to conform to such regulations as the governing class think proper to promulgate. While it may be conceded that some credit should be allowed to such an unworthy motive, and some good result can in some countries be shown to modify, and partially excuse the abominable lying stories and deceptions told by the priests of every variety, with a direct design, and also intention, to create a superstitious reverence and an exaggerated estimate of the importance of such instructions as these priests choose to, and do, from time to time impart, it is not admitted that on the whole, or in the aggregate, the benefit is anywhere near sufficient to offset the cost of maintaining such an enormous expense as the institution of any form of religion makes necessary, even when it comes to any community in the most simple and inexpensive manner; but it is seldom that such a fortunate train of circumstances is met with, for the poor, and those most in need of instruction, are for such a reason deprived of any benefit that the priest considers, he confers on such as can afford to sit within the church to whom he officiates.

In a free country like America, every important question is apt to be discussed and the discussion is continued till the question is disposed of either by the majority, who, on its ripening into proposed legal enactment, putting it on the statute book and compelling obedience to it or in its abandonment, as of not sufficient consequence to be worthy of such a place. The priests of former times, in this free country's history, neglected to put god into the national constitution, which was chiefly made by Jefferson, acting under the direction of Washington, Franklin and Tom Paine, a quartette of as rank infidels as were then to be found on earth. So to make amends for this oversight, the priests and theologians said one to another, "Go to" let us while we may enact some Sunday laws to compel, if necessary, the infidel minority to observe our Sunday, whether they will or not, and many other laws forbidding recre-

ation and taxing property for the support of the priests, and others like these. These now considered obnoxious laws were all made before any emigration to this country had begun, except such as was caused by religious persecution, but now that foreign emigrants, of the free thinking variety, are finding the Sunday laws too restraining, and the disposition of the religious fanatics and priests is resolute to enforce these laws so as materially to interfere with the carrying out the customs of the country from which these emigrants departed, a determination is nearly reached to cause, if not the repeal, a suitable modification to relieve them from their most objectionable features.

A wise course for the priest and fanatic would be a compromise or a disposition to be moderate in their censure and lax to enforce laws found to be obnoxious to citizens in all respects their equals, and if this course is not taken by them, an unconditional repeal of them will no doubt result. When the priest looks about him to find any competent authority to give him a right to have any Sunday at all, he can find none any better than what is derived from another priest of a long past age, no better, if as good, as himself. The truth is, and the priests all know it, that the ten commandments found in the 20th chapter of Exodus, instead of being of divine origin, are only an invention (for a purpose) of the priests of the Israelites, who, both priests and people were scarcely above the barbarous stage of civilization, and however salutary or beneficial some of them may be conceded to be, to restrain the passions of such a rude people, they do not, of necessity apply to another people in another stage of civilization.

A day of rest to be periodically observed by all is only a specious humbug, and the reason given for its compulsory observance because "God rested," is the most stupid humbug of all, and the author of this reason, whoever it was, whether Moses, or any other, discovered his mistake, and in another statement further along, corrected his blunder, and gave as a reason why they should keep the Sabbath, that, "because on that day ye were delivered out of the hands of the Egyptians." Neither reason ever had any importance, and the whole contrivance was for the purpose of giving the priests the opportunity to gather them in companies, to strengthen and perpetuate their infernal imposition by further additions to it, as circumstances might arise to make further imposition necessary. The mere change of day to be observed is of no importance, and like the others, has no value in any sense, but a mere ethical value to some individuals. In properly organized society no rest but such as night is intended to secure, and does secure when used for that purpose is required, but in all cases there is too much enforced rest to a portion, who would be glad to work on the one hand, and too

much ambition to overwork on the other, to make any system of periodical rest, either desirable or possible, and when Sunday is abolished, the priests' vocation, as such, is gone, and with it the golden stream is dried up, and humanity applauds.

While I am generous enough to concede that some of the ministers of our day and generation, are actuated by a mixed motive to do some good in return for the salary they receive, this concession only includes the younger and less experienced, who have not yet discovered the trick that has been played upon them ever since they were born, instructing them falsely, when impressible, and continuing the process to mature life, all others are contemptible hypocrites, and frauds, whose income is procured by no process better than actual stealing. These are the ones I am after, because the good they claim to do is immensely over-estimated, and the harm they do is by the average dupe, entirely overlooked. It is nothing less than an unspeakable, unthinkable outrage, to teach any immature mind any form or degree of superstition, from any source, either human or divine, and as supernaturalism is the greatest part of the instruction of all the priesthood, their influence for evil can never be over-estimated. Therefore I say abolish Sunday and all other so-called sacred days, such as Christmas, Lent fast days, and the like; transform the buildings called churches and temples into school houses and hospitals, and reduce the Bible, as Ingersoll proposes, to the work of mere man, and relieve god from the disagreeable reputation he has been obliged to submit to, by being caricatured as he is in this divine work, of which he has been accused of being author, by these priests, for a purpose diabolical and devilish.

I want to put on record some thoughts about the capacity of the average priest, to appreciate what has been done by the infidel, to both construct and put into operation the only system of government that is fit to survive. If "Tom Payne," as the priests call him, in derision, had never wrote his pamphlet entitled "Common Sense," it is very likely that Thomas Jefferson would never have been able to develop the form of free government, under which we live, and if he had never wrote his book, "The Age of Reason," neither Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, and many other able men like them, would never have been able to emerge from the darkness of puritanical superstition, with which they had been in their infancy poisoned. Payne was a host, not only as it related to civil government, but in his ability to cope with theologians, and destroy their flimsy webs, and the animosity of the priests of his day has been inherited, till at the present day, all his printed works are committed to the flames as fast as any priest can find one, and no popular book store dare permit one of his works to soil their shelves, and it

is very rare that the most diligent search can succeed in finding one. You can find the Pilgrims' Progress, Paradise Lost, Bunyan's Life, the Shepherds of Salisbury Plain, and such like, in any quantity, for these have the sanction and patronage of the priest, and their tendency is to strengthen his position and perpetuate his infernal imposition.

Some 200 years ago, Jefferson had a son of mature age, to whom he wrote a series of letters. After they were both dead, some of their successors gathered these letters and printed them, and in some old libraries can be found these four volumes. Many years ago the writer of these pages, found in one of these letters, this advice: "I advise you to read the Bible much, I myself have always done so. I advise you to be divested of prejudice, and when you come to any such a passage as is recorded in the book of Joshua, where the sun and moon obeyed his command and stood still, put your reasoning faculties at work, and estimate the consequence that would have ensued if that statement was true. From what you know of astronomy, and the motion of the bodies connected with the solar system, the earth revolving then as now, a thousand miles an hour, estimate what would be the consequence of a sudden stop. If you can believe it would cause no disaster such as the total annihilation not only of both armies who were contending for supremacy, and required more time to come to a decision, and got it in this way, and not only that, but a destruction of the whole solar system. I say you have a perfect right to do so. I have tried that experiment, and I can't believe it, but that is no guide for you." Jefferson had not only read Tom Payne's books, but had very intimate associations with so learned a gentleman as Payne was, and the result was he learned to use his reason. I at that time of reading these Jefferson letters, and afterwards "Common Sense," and the "Age of Reason," by Payne, began to wake up and use my own reason, that had lain not only dormant, but paralyzed, and I soon found that reason and revelation were not in harmony.

Perhaps some 200 years after the hand that write these lines about reason, has crumbled to dust, some person who is uncertain what road to follow, these feeble lines will cause him to reach a decision. Jefferson had no thought of his letters being printed, and they were not in his life time, but I mean to print what I write, for unless I do, I am sure it will never be printed, but when printed and distributed, destruction will be impossible to the extent of annihilation. My fate at the end of my earthly life will be similar to that of Payne, who was buried without the intervention of any priest, very likely at his own request, and as his family was too poor to more than mark the spot, by the most simple symbol, 200 years intervened before his free thinking successors were



numerous enough and opulent enough to erect a suitable costly monument, that now adorns the spot where his remains were deposited, and his fame will never die while any lover of liberty lives to keep it green. On one side of this monument is inscribed a stanza composed by a negro who was left behind to fill the grave. "A genuine literary gem."

"Poor Tom Payne, here he lies,  
Nobody laughs, and nobody cries;  
Where he has gone, and how he fares,  
Nobody knows, and nobody cares."\*

At this point a diversion is required to give a definition of the Bible more distinct than can otherwise be given in such a work as this, of what the author regards as due the reader. The Bible, or as the word means sacred book, upon which any form of religious belief is founded, and to which its propagators and teachers resort, to sustain their assumptions and enforce their claim to credibility and authority is of such prime importance to the success of the effort to establish such form, that no doubt or question as to its divine origin or authorship is, or can be admissible, hence a supernatural, improbable and absolutely impossible combination of events that become necessary to invent to clothe or involve this sacred book with the necessary amount of mystery and absurdity so as to cause it to be wholly unintelligible to the comprehension of any person, except the few impostors who begin any given imposition, and who invariably cause such explanations to be received and adopted, as are or seem to them to be the most likely to be successful and permanent, and others who in turn become their successors, add from time to time, as circumstances seem to require or allow, other impositions, and enforce them in the same manner. The Bible of the Christian form of religion partakes of the above described characteristics to such an extent as to make it wholly and totally worthless as a guide to human conduct, and in many of its teachings, if a literal construction is given to the language it is absolutely vile and pernicious, and its representative heroes and examples of piety and virtue are unworthy of imitation; none of its moral teachings are either new or in any sense superior to those of some others as the Jew or the Mahometan

\*NOTE.—Tradition asserts that when the sexton of the cemetery placed the remains in the grave, and the bearers had retired, an Irishman and an negro were left to fill the grave. The negro said: "'Tis too bad to cover up such a man as this without anything being said. You say something." The Irishman declined, as he was a good Catholic, and had no gifts of that kind. "You say something." The negro leaned on his shovel and looked into the open grave, and with no chance at preparation, said "Something." No poet of ancient or modern times ever constructed so rich a poem in so few words, with all the preparation that time can give.

or even the Mormon, but as long as its inventors and their confederates, the priesthood of all grades are united in their determination to oppose the least sign of hesitation or doubt either as to the divine source from which it was derived, or to its supernatural teachings and sublime character of its authors, and can succeed to silence any and all who are bold and honest enough to reveal the true nature of both its contents, and the source from which it undoubtedly was derived, and that a human source only, just so long and no longer, will it retain its hold on the dupes who have in the past relied upon its teachings, as both valuable and necessary, as a preparation for a life beyond the present. The most vigorous and determined and presumably to the friends of the Bible as divine dangerous warfare on the integrity of the Bible is now in progress, and the ability and number of the great scholars who have taken the field of controversy and display both ability and energy in assailing it so as to weaken its force and value, as a reliable source from which to derive any valuable information connected with the great question of a future life, and also as a foundation on which to found and build a system so complex and impracticable as is that of the Christian, who never had any better ground than assumption, is wonderful and encouraging to skeptics.

The origin of the book, commonly called the Bible, is enveloped in so much mystery, and so many contradictory theories are held by those who use it as a basis for their religious belief, that no reliance can be placed on the authorship, or the time when the fragmentary parts, which together make the volume, were written. Different and equally able investigators and commentators have assigned so many different theories, on both of these questions, about which no dispute or question ought ever to have been possible, that no reliance can be placed on either, or all of them, and the whole question is still unsettled, except as it is announced by the Jews, and they not being disputed have fixed the date when they, as a nation began to reckon time, and how long that was before they became a nation, when the world was created and the human race started with other animals in the struggle for existence, and the Christian being a sort of mongrel Jew and pagan, have accepted their computation of time, and in addition to that, have fixed a date when they, as Christian nations had a beginning. Pagan, or as we say heathen nations, also begin their national eras in the remote past, far previous to the Jew. The Mahometan also rejects all others, and begins his national era when Mahomet was obliged in order to avoid destruction, to abandon Mecca, and flee to Medina, and this movement is called the "Hegira." The Mormon has not yet become sufficiently strong and numerous enough to fix a date for a separate national existence, and are still in a state of development with as good prospect

of success as any of the others had in the same space of time, from their weak origin, to fully developed religious systems. There is consequently no reason why we should care to inquire definitely about any of these matters, but the easiest way out of these difficulties is to have sufficient faith to accept what is held by common consent as the nearest approach to the exact truth that it is possible to obtain, and let the same uncertainty remain as it has for thousands of years.

However, none of these expositors of any or all these so-called sacred writings even pretend that any of these have ever been made known to any portion of the human race, except the Jews, in the language in which it was at first revealed to these unknown writers, but the perhapses, the may bes, the ifs, the ands, the wherefores, and guesses on all subjects are resorted to so to, if possible, harmonize the conflicting statements of these pretended revelations with the known facts of science, which has succeeded in establishing, beyond any further possibility of doubt, that all these pretended revelations are of no account whatever, and are absolutely false, and further none of these unfounded statements, such as the creation, the fall of the first human pair, the legend of the garden of Eden, the flood, the tower of Babel, giving the origin of various languages, so as to interfere with its completion, the giving of the law, and all this mass of absurdity, finds any support in profane or secular history, therefore gives no room on which to found the least reliance. The whole necessity or object of any revelation presupposes that a great and important necessity existed, that this small and insignificant spot of the universe, called by astronomers the earth, which is but a grain of sand when compared with the visible universe, to say nothing of the invisible, which yet only partially fill space, was of such vast importance as to justify the creator of all things to so far compromise his dignity as to condescend to communicate the precise information as to the proper course for his creatures to pursue, to make happiness possible in this life, to the few miserable human beings, who had their habitation on this earth, and also to reveal their destiny in a future life of which nothing is said in this revelation is presuming too much to be entitled to anything more substantial than a hope, or is in fact too weak for faith to lay hold of. When we examine the mediums through which these pretended revelations were made, and analyze their abilities, and their qualifications, entitling them to be selected by an omniscient being such as god is represented to be, through and by which to communicate this most important information to mankind, we can be certain that what they reveal had no better source than their own weak and undeveloped intellects, for it would be an insult to attribute such a mess of obscenity and absurdity to any supernatural

being, and then hold up that being as a fit and proper object of worship.

If any information was so important as to justify an infinite being, to give it to one race or tribe of his creatures, every individual of the race to whom this was important, was just as much entitled to have a separate revelation as any particular favored one was, in fact no revelation is possible in any other form, for a revelation to one, to be by him transmitted to another, is no revelation to this second person, but mere hearsay, requiring faith without evidence, which no one but the person of the weakest mental capacity ever submits to and that is in fact the only way this worthless Bible has been forced onto the deluded dupes of the first set of impostors, who invented the beginning of this stupendous imposition, and made its way in the world. The successive generations of men, who have succeeded one another, since the first introduction of this book, after its translation, have without any remonstrance or inquiry, submitted to the different impostors, who have succeed one another, and have continually added one imposition after another, till the race now on the stage are beginning to investigate doubt and inquire, and when this process is fairly begun, it can never stop short of a complete destruction of all this false assumption.

Let us examine some of the reasons why it is impossible for any body but a natural fool or a mere infant, just beginning to manifest any mental capacity to attach the least importance to this book, more than to any other, on account of any superstitious feeling of reverence. No book that was ever written, in any language, can possibly convey to any reader, however familiar he may be with that language, precisely the same thoughts the author of that book intended to convey, for he himself, is not able at all times to clearly state in written language, his own thoughts on a given subject, for want of words of the appropriate meaning, to clearly express his thoughts, except upon such subjects as are capable of demonstration or proof, as all scientific subjects are, but if this book is to be circulated where the language in which it is written is unknown, then a translation becomes indispensable. The author who writes the book never makes this translation, and whoever makes it, cannot possibly give anything but an imperfect translation, leaving the meaning of the author still more obscure than he at first made it, for want of words suitable to express his thoughts precisely, a second translation is then made to adapt it to another language, spoken and understood by another people, a translation of a translation, which in most cases, nearly destroys the first written copy, and any value it at first had is wholly lost and the foregoing process describes the manner in which this worthless book we call the Bible, has come down to our times, and we are required and expected to reverence it, and rely upon



its teachings, and use its precepts as a guide by which to find our way prosperously through this world, and reach heaven, and escape hell in a world to come. Let this process go on as it confessedly has gone on in the multitudes of re-translations, the Bible has undergone, to make it adapted to the various languages among which missionaries have been sent, and who is so blind, he cannot see and believe that what we have, is no more to be depended upon than a mere dream as being in any sense like the revelation first given, admitting any was ever given, and when the further fact is considered, that the information that this revelation is of the highest importance, and the precise meaning sought to be conveyed by this revelation, must be so clear and easily understood by the weakest intellect, for he is as much entitled to its benefits as the strongest, the absurdity of trying to palm off this mess of trash as a revelation from god of unquestionable truth and undoubted importance, becomes but little, if any short of a crime.

There is another way to look at this subject that is still more abhorrent, and unreasonable. The revisions of this many times translated book are numerous, each revision claiming to be more accurate than any of its predecessors, and interpolations, and omissions numerous and important, and which seriously alter many hitherto esteemed fundamental theories, built upon the original supposed authentic first copies. The author of the dream of some wild lunatic which the various commentators have finally concluded must be John the evangelist, and put last in the list so as to give force, to the threat there made, and presumably by the same divine direction by which all this miserable dream or vision was directed, he was under, when he wrote the preceding part, threatening all those who should dare to add to, or to take from, or alter in the slightest degree, any of the statements thus far made, and annexes the severest penalties for any such interference, but in spite of any of these warnings or threats being heeded, a great many thousand alterations, omissions and additions are made in every new version or revision; how many in those revisions previous to the latest one of the new testament cannot be stated, but it is reasonable to conclude they are as numerous, if not more so, than this last, which according to a computation published by the direction of those who made the revision, is as follows: Eighteen thousand three hundred and fifty-eight words changed by a substituted rendering of the received text, four thousand six hundred and fifty-four words added in translation of the received text, five hundred and fifty words in translation of the additions in the Greek text, one thousand six hundred and four words to translate an altered Greek text, and two hundred and twenty-three words taken from the margin into the text, making in all twenty-five thousand three hun-

dred and eighty-eight words changed out of one hundred and seventy-nine thousand nine hundred and fourteen words making seventeen per cent. of the whole. These holy revisers paid no attention to the threats or the warning of the miserable author of these warnings, but as far as it is at present known, none of these penalties have been inflicted on these misguided persons who have dared in the face of these threats and warnings to so far mutilate what was before described to be so perfect that any mutilation would completely destroy its authority, and any omission would presuppose a want of wisdom on the part of the inspired author that caused him to write either more or less than the holy ghost dictated to him.

Let us examine some of the omissions in the revised new testament. One omission occurs in the first epistle or letter of this same St. John, who made these fearful threats in the Revelations, at the close of the last chapter, and is a very important omission, for it nearly destroys the doctrine of the trinity of the god-head. The omitted words occur in the seventh verse, and are the strongest of any on which this trinity humbug rests. These are the words: "There are three that bare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," and this omission so perceptibly weakens this foolish doctrine of the trinity, that the Unitarians are very confident in expecting strong reinforcements to their ranks, who have never admitted that the fictitious Christ was more than human. The trinitarian still holds on to one or two weak passages that gives a little hint in their favor, but they have lost their main support in losing this verse. Another omission destroys both the Baptist doctrine, and also what little authority there apparently was for the outrageous conduct of the missionaries, who always have insisted on forcing themselves on to the inhabitants of distant regions, uninvited under a false impression that it was an obligation. The sixteenth chapter of Mark, from the ninth verse to the close, is all spurious, and is so certified to by these revisers, who inclose in brackets what they say in the margin, is not found in any of the manuscripts, clearly proving that these spurious verses have been added by former revisers. They have also destroyed the previously recorded statements in the second epistle to his son Timothy, which Paul calls his son, simply because he succeeded in humbugging him into renouncing a former belief which had a value for one different, but no better. In the second letter to him, he says in the sixteenth verse of the third chapter: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, etc." The revised version reads: "Every scripture that is inspired of God, etc." Who is to be the judge what is inspired and what is not, and what is to prevent any who chooses to deny any inspiration to any portion of it, and still claim to admit and

practice the beneficial moral precepts that are scattered about in it, but are not new or original, but are found in writings, dated thousands of years before the new testament was produced, or any of its authors lived, and from which these precepts were derived?

Any one not competent to examine into the subject for himself, but depended on the statements of these humbugs, called Christian ministers, who have set themselves up as commentators and expositors of Bible morality, that, if the Bible was taken away from any people that ever have had it, they would immediately lapse from civilization of a superior order into barbarism. When the truth is, and can be demonstrated that some of the best specimens of a high civilization, whose inhabitants lived, flourished and perished thousands of years before any part of the Bible, or the authors of it were called into existence, and are at present living side by side, with the best civilization the Bible nations can produce, and are every way as prosperous and happy as they would be if nothing but the Bible had ever been used by them, and are vastly better off in some important respects, for they are free from many of the glaring vices which are constantly eating out the vitals and sapping the foundations on which all civilized society must depend for permanence and stability.

The various nations or people, constituting all living in South America, who always have had the Christian Bible and religion, are notwithstanding that fact, as barbarous. at the present time, as any country under heaven, so also is Central America and Mexico, and will always remain, so long as the priests can retain their present unholy and superstitious grasp on the masses, and prevent the spread of secular knowledge, for Christianity alone never gave the least assistance to any nation, any more than any other has. How was it in Europe during the dark ages. You have only to read the history of that time to be convinced that the church was the only obstacle that prevented the acquiring or the use of knowledge, and in every age, and country, where it can crush out the masses, and fill them with a rubbish they call religion, barbarism is the result instead of progress. Then look at the disgraceful way the Bible has been gotten together or compiled into its present form. There is revealed a sanguinary contest in a literary way as to the genuine or spurious character of its fragmentary parts, making it a mere matter of personal impression, based on a majority vote of a nest of corrupt impostors, who had the impudence to assume to decide for all those who succeeded them to whom this Bible was to be furnished, what was revelation, and what was not, and the result has been to divide and weaken the contending factions, and deprive the people of the benefit of united and harmonious agreement and prevent any intelligent conclusion from being reached.

A large and powerful branch, if not an actual majority refuse to admit that the Apocrypha of the old testament is not inspired, and consequently use the Apocryphal books, and find therein authority to found the doctrine of purgatory or intermediate state between time and eternity, also the authority to expect through prayer or mass for the dead believer, who has failed to get absolution, rescue such soul, and secure admission to the happiness of heaven, if a sufficient sum of money is forthcoming, and not otherwise. The Greek Christians agree with neither the Roman or the Protestant Christian, as they have no pope, and allow the priests to marry, and have not yet discovered that time is reckoned by the period of the annual revolution of the earth around the sun, and consequently are two weeks behind the rest of the world, in all their calculations, a period at the present time, amounting to fifteen days; that is a specimen of how fanaticism and superstition can make downright fools of their victims and hold them there.

The Armenians, who have their home in the country where the great Apostle Paul performed the greater part of his missionary labor, but who are now subjects of the Turks, differ from all the rest, and refuse to fellowship any of them, and have a Bible of their own make, differing all from each other, drawing radically different conclusions from substantially the same source, and holding them with the most determined tenacity, and are all trying to convert the supposed heathen world to their own peculiar systems, but meet with very poor success, considering the vast expense attending the efforts put forth in the useless operations, most of which, instead of being put to the use for which it was obtained, finds its way into the pockets of the rascally managers of this mission racket, and the poor deluded missionary is left to shirk for himself, the best he can. If nobody derived any pecuniary benefit by upholding this spurious and worthless publication, its merits alone would not be able to sustain it a year, but such a vast horde of greedy ecclesiastics, of all grades, have a direct object in making the Bible appear too sacred, and too mysterious for the common people to understand, hence the calling of the various grades of clergy is made indispensable, and no wonder they so represent it, for as soon as doubt and uncertainty are allowed to gain any advantage over credulity and superstition, they very well understand that unless this is prevented or neutralized, the whole rotten fabric of fraud and deception on which they subsist and thrive, will tumble into its well merited ruin, and when that stage is reached, there is some hope that reason and common sense will be taken as a guide in the investigation of religious questions, the same as it is now used in all other matters which concern human welfare. It is the most astonishing and unaccountable thing for a rational



being to try to contemplate or explain why it is that all business transactions are conducted on strictly business methods by all business men, according to their capacity to manage such business and a rigid, honesty and integrity is required in all transactions, by all subordinates, who are employed by such business managers, and any deviation from what instinctively is admitted to be right and just between man and man, is sternly rebuked, and as far as possible is detected and punished, and at the same time, and in the same community another class of men apparently of the same general ability and intelligence, submit unresistingly to the most monstrous and absurd impositions in the name of religion and no thought is given and no effort is made to even attempt the investigation of the most momentous of all subjects, so considered by these dupes, the eternal welfare of their immortal souls, but leave the whole matter, notwithstanding its importance, to be settled by a set of priests, in whom they place confidence, and who are not worthy of any confidence to instruct them and they receive such instruction and pay liberally for it without so much as inquiring as to the moral honesty and integrity of these men when the truth is that the men so employed and paid are for the most part wholly untrustworthy.

In order to make any religious imposition possible to be upheld and perpetuated, the impostor, who invented these various systems of fraud and deception, also invented special days on which they required their dupes to come together to receive such instruction as they choose to impart. This is as true in the case of those forms of religious superstition which by the Christians are named Pagans, or heathens, as it is in the case of the Jew and Christian, and authentic history of the Chinese, the Japanese, the Indies, and other now extinct nations, represent that long before the period when the Jew began to compute time, these sacred days had become firmly fixed in the esteem and practice of these primitive men, and this mythical account of the origin of the Jewish Sabbath, recorded in Exodus is a mere reproduction of the then ancient myth, but so altered as to change the date when the Sabbath was to be observed, and the cause why it must be observed at that time so as to make such reason seem probable to the ignorant dupes of these impostors, who have since been named Jews, that god did actually need, and take rest after such a struggle to produce something out of nothing, and has actually rested or ceased to create something out of nothing ever since the first six days.

That impression by constant usage, and long, continued and persistent instruction by each successive generation of impostors, who finally established a hierarchy of grades of religious teachers as prophets, high priests, priests, and other inferior orders, became, in time, so firmly

established in the usages and practice of the lower classes, under the false impression that it was really necessary for their physical welfare to devote one-seventh of the time to physical rest, that this same Jewish successors of this first set of dupes after more than four thousand years since their history begins, has transpired that they still observe and conduct such religious ceremonies and worship as are possible to them in the place where their lot is cast on the same seventh day. The Christian while hypocritically using the ten commandments, simply because they are a part of revelation and confessedly better entitled to credit than any other part of this pretended revelation has never been able to invent any plausible reason why he did not adopt the Jewish Sabbath, but the reason they give for the change to the first day, are so very absurd, and unsatisfactory, that a large amount of force and compulsion was required for more than three hundred years before any fixed time for sacred instruction was generally observed. These reasons, poor as they were and are, finally resulted in causing the Christians' Sunday to be adopted and observed for the reason, in addition to what was before paraded as a reason, that a heathen emperor, named Constantine, was converted on that day of the week by a vision or dream, and he had enough civil power to enforce obedience and accordingly it has since been adopted as the Christian Sabbath or Sunday, and after a loose fashion it has been feebly held and observed by some portion of the Christian world, but that portion represented by the Greek schismatic faction, stubbornly refuse to adopt the Gregorian calendar, and are more than two weeks behind all other Christians in observing, both the birth or Christmas, or the death of Christ, or Easter, and, of course, are all wrong in their Sunday calculations, and are just as well off as though they coincided with their fellow Christians. The manifest tendency of the present time is towards the abolishing these long perpetuated impositions, which never were of any benefit, but in most cases a positive damage, by causing the people to assemble in a building called the sanctuary, and listen to spurious instruction, so as to intensify and perpetuate superstition and also fanaticism, and submit to a system of extortion of their resources of so many of the poorer and ignorant classes as to diminish to a great extent their comfort and pleasure in this world, for the sake of a fictitious and impossible hereafter, which is made to these ignorant dupes to appear real by this false instruction. This applies to the whole human family, in all countries, and under all forms of religious humbug and deception for the whole human race, as far as commerce has yet extended, have the blighting curse of some form of religious humbug and deception to grapple with, and this becomes so costly and intolerably oppressive in time, as to create and

perpetuate poverty, and for want of resources, to provide means to instruct the successive generations of children secures the continuation of ignorance, making it easy to impose any form of deception, which the priests consider necessary in order to make their influence perpetual.

The Christian bigots, who assert that the old testament scriptures are divinely inspired, are undoubtedly under the impression that the writers thereof, whoever they were, living in the times they did, and among the vile surroundings by which they must have been environed, could not have originated some of those confessedly lofty moral precepts, which every skeptic is ready to admit they in some parts contain, unless they were divinely instructed or inspired, when the real truth is that all these moral precepts are found in writings that were extant long previous to the time when any of the most ancient of these fragments were written, and were accessible to these writers, and hence all these sublime teachings were the result of the wisdom and experience of many generations of the ancestors of these supposed, inspired writers, and as an offset or counter argument against the possibility of maintaining or upholding the theory of divine inspiration, it is only necessary to say and every candid mind will admit its truth and justice, without the least hesitation.

A large portion of these so-called sacred writings are composed of as low meagre, and unworthy sentiments as ever took their rise in any savage, and uncultivated intellects, and it is only by repeating the changes over and over, on a few good and worthy passages, which are universally and unhesitatingly admitted to be salutary, and passing over the low, obscene, and contemptibly vile and untruthful passages, the priests, continually and intentionally, impose upon the people, and they being for the most part too sluggish and indifferent to "search the scriptures for themselves, up to a very recent period, and those in these later times, who have by the advancement of scientific discoveries, been compelled to harmonize the conflicting statements of science and revelation, finding it impossible to do so, and being candid and truthful enough to admit a want of harmony, and because science could bring proof, and revelation could do no more than assume, have dared to publicly and fearlessly declare that the Bible had no more claim to be regarded as inspiration, than any other ancient writings, and when such admissions are made publicly and fearlessly by the best scholars, and those who occupy the highest positions in the best theological institutions, and occupy and adorn the best grades of church pastorates and pulpits, how can those who always have looked to such men as authority, longer refuse to as much as investigate for themselves or else accept as authority, the statements of those in whom they formerly trusted,

when their teachings were in harmony with that which the creed to which they before consented, but which is found out later to be defective.

When we attempt to compare the teachings of science, which reveals nature's laws to the comprehension of the average human intellect, with the teachings of revelation, as they are unfolded or explained by the so-called science of theology, we perceive how much more satisfactory the laws and movements of nature are, than is the entire system of theology, with all the absurd twaddle about angry gods and devils, heavens and hells, that theologic priests have been able by the revealed word of God to invent and endeavor to substantiate, or make real, we easily see there is no comparison between the two, for nature is all that is grand and great and true, and can be, and is so proved by science, while theology, based on revelation, is the quintessence of ignorance, imagination and falsehood. Nature, as taught by astronomy, for one example is the great reality, the great truth, and the same is true of mathematics, and other of the sciences, while theology is wholly fiction, invention, and absurdity, one is real and free as air to any who will study it, while the other has an excessive price, and when that is paid, you have simply guess work and arrogant assumption, and it results as it is easy to see, in an immense difference, there is in favor of nature over revelation of the Bible, as we have it.

As this charge of debauchery and robbery, chiefly applies to the mother of all church organizations, the Holy Roman church, but at the same time though, in a lesser, in a modified sense, the charge of extortion applies to all churches, it becomes necessary and proper to separate the Roman branch from all other Christians, and inquire what Romanism is, and give at least a partial description of some of its leading characteristics, for even a meagre delineation will disclose such a horrible and marvelous structure of imposture and fraud, that history will be consulted in vain, to find anything to compare with it in atrocity, or in absurdity, for it has not one redeeming trait that gives it the right to be called a Christian church, but instead, it should rank far below any form of paganism the world has ever produced, in the various forms of civilizations, which have existed in the past, or in the present. What a marvelous structure it is, with its hierarchy or governing machinery, ranging through long centuries, almost from apostolic days to our own; all this time, living side by side, and mingling with forms of civilization and uncivilization the most diverse, and the most contradictory, through all the more than fifteen hundred years, since its first assumption of universal authority, and its ambition to attain to universal power, all this time, and also at the present time, asserting and maintaining an



effective control over opinions, and institutions, always claiming and insisting in the face of all opposition, that its pontificate dated back to the fishermen of Galilee, and its pontiffs or popes, still residing, and in a spiritual sense reigning there in the city, as they say, but cannot prove, that heard Saint Peter preach, and whom it claims to have seen martyred or slain, by being crucified with his head downwards, impiously and untruthfully pretending to sit in the chair literally, which St. Peter once sat in, and to hold in his hand the keys to the door or gate to the kingdom of heaven, once given by Christ to Saint Peter. This great assumption of authority and power, has been shaken, exiled, broken again and again, by Lutheran and other like revolts, and French revolutions, yet always righting itself, and recovering, and reasserting a vitality, that neither force or contending factions of opinions have yet been able to extinguish.

Once, for many centuries in its early history, with its foot on the neck of kings, creating and deposing at will, and having the fate of empires in its hands, and even now superintending and managing the grandest ecclesiastical mechanism that man has ever seen, ordering fast days and feast days, and regulating with omnipotent fiat the very diet, both in kind, and quantity, of many millions of people, having countless bands of the most obsequious religious soldiers, trained, organized and officered, as such a soldiery never was before or since, and backed and supported by an infallibility, that is defiant of reason, and intolerant of questioning, an inquisition which has been previously partly described in this writer's account, to either bend or break the will, and a confessional to unlock all hearts, and master the most profound secrets of all consciences. Such has always been the mighty church of Rome, and there it still is, somewhat cast down to be sure from what it once was, but not yet destroyed, perplexed by the variety and freedom of an intellectual civilization, which it hates, and vainly tries to crush, and failing to do that, laboriously trying to adjust itself to the Europe, and the world of the nineteenth century, as it once before, tried to adjust and adapt itself to Europe as it was in the twelfth century, by lengthening its cords, and strengthening its stakes, enlarging the boundary of its tents, and stretching forth the curtains of its habitations, even so as to include the free government of this republic in the new world of America.

Such now is the tremendous fabric of Rome, attempting unsuccessfully to stand out on the foreground of the world's history, and bearing on its scarred bosom, the marks of its contests in the various civilizations and barbarisms, through which it has passed in its progress to its present position. This position, if we regard it as a mere human institu-

tion, which it undoubtedly is, is worthy of the profoundest study of all men; but the moment it puts in a claim of divine or holy origin, it sinks beneath the contempt of human reason. If it comes before us in its sacerdotal robes, and bids us bow our faith to its monstrous profanities, we shake it from us, and cast it off with disgust and horror unutterable. But in its human aspects, and in its moral and political career, we will look fairly at it and inquire, how it comes to pass that an institution so loaded with the most outrageous crimes, and horrible groans of ages long past, and stained with the blood of unnumbered martyred victims of its savage cruelty, and fraught with such sickening and foolish absurdities, could hold on so long, and play the part it has, and still does in the history of the world's progress. Although such an assertion would be strictly true, it will not do to dispose of this question, by simply saying the Roman church was all a lie, and a damnable cheat in its beginning, and still is as every other institution of barbarism was, and would now be if transplanted to our times; nor will it do to call it, in its origin and first inception, a deliberate scheme for usurping the rights and freedom of mankind, on so magnificent proportions as it afterwards developed, for it was not merely that, but also a natural growth, out of the social, moral and political causes, which operated in the first six centuries; for it grew up slowly and naturally, was molded into its ultimate form by the pressure of many outward circumstances, and bears the marks much as other institutions of former times do, of the various ages and states of civilization that have successively been contemporaneous with it.

Who is so lacking in perception, that he cannot see, that Romanism as we know it, and have it, was the product of a spurious form of nominal Christianity, coming in contact and conflict with pagan modes of thought and feeling, which when this monstrous iniquity was first invented, had full possession of the Roman world, for its doctrines at the outset, were not simply and only the priestly inventions and manufactures, they were also the expressions of the prevalent tendencies of the pagan, or heathen minds; and the effect of general causes in the moral world. What was image worship, and hero worship, but concession to demands of the popular mind as then existing among all forms of paganism; and any one not blinded by priestly instruction and bias, must admit that such worship is as far removed from the spirit and precepts of the Christ of the Gospels, as it is possible to imagine, and is Greek philosophy only.

The origin of Romanism then, is simply and only a compromise between Christianity and paganism, by means of which paganism, nearly all the superstitions and immoralities were absorbed, and they

thus contrived to get themselves baptized into the Christian name and usage, and this fatal consummation was not wholly the work of the priest alone, for the people were ready to sanction and adopt what the priest demanded, for no interference with established pagan usage was required. What were the various councils for, but to represent the demands of the people, who sent them as their delegates to formulate, after deliberation and debate, with their pagan adversaries, such questions as, whether for instance, Mary of Nazareth might be invoked as mother of god, which when decided by a majority vote in the affirmative, was received without further objection, and has never been rescinded, and although this and other like doctrines were directly made and formulated by priests, it was done at the wish and demand of the people, and the Christianized pagan, was compelled to assent to what was to him a monstrous lie, because a majority of council was corrupt enough to decide to that effect, and this is only a sample of all other compromises, that made in the long run Romanism what it is; the confessional, masses for the dead, penances, purgatory, the consecration of names and relics of monasticism, with its fasts and vigils, and a thousand more like absurdities, were the product of the general demand of the pagan feeling, finding voice and expression in connection with the Christian ideas. In like manner the dogmatizing theories of Rome was advanced into a system of theology, and long creeds were fenced in by short and sharp anathemas, invented, it is true, by the priest, but only to satisfy a demand of the people, which demand was created by previous false instruction, by these same or like priests, having the ability by their training in theology, to dispel and demolish the reasoning of the Greek mind, who were inclined to syllogism and disputation; and when brought into contact with such eminent thinkers as the various monasteries had developed, the Christian was able and did in fact translate paganism into Christianity, by a sort of mental somerset, or metempsychosis, so that the soul, or previous impression of the Greek, was made to live over again; and this or something similar, was the process of introducing what has passed as Christianity, as far as it has been able to find any adherents, therefore there is nothing very strange or mysterious about the rise and the subsequent growth of this vast fabric of Romanism, for it rose out of a great number of interests, or intellectual and moral wants and habits, embodied into an organized institution by a long succession of powerful minds, themselves partaking of these varied influences, and often giving expression to them in connection with the most vulgar superstitions of the times.

Romanism has been, and always is ready and willing to compound, or amalgamate with any and every popular vice and superstition, for

the sake of unlimited dominion over the public mind, and this has been, and now is the means, by which it has acquired a fearful control over opinions and institutions, during the fifteen centuries of its reign, and it has yet to show any benefit, to as much as begin to offset the immense cost and suffering it has been directly responsible for. The struggle of this monstrous imposition, was, first to get established; and ever since it felt strong enough to undertake such a devilish task, its chief struggle and endeavor has been, to drag the heart and brain of man backward into the night, out of which it came. It has always been the scourge of modern civilization, by obstinately keeping the free progressive spirit of man locked up in the same eternal damnable prison of an arbitrary ritual, and an artificial creed, containing dogmas at which common sense revolts, enforced by anathemas, or denunciations, at which humanity does, and well it may shudder; and so ordering things, that there could be neither progression or change, without a life and death conflict; compelling the spirit of reform to be revolutionary, giving Europe many centuries of religious wars, and bequeathing to European civilization, a spirit of intolerance, tyranny and fiery denunciation, which, but for a counter spirit stronger than itself, would have left the world at this time, as far from Christianity and Christian civilization, as it was when Pope Innocent, the third, sat in Saint Peter's chair, and Hildebrand was the Roman emperor. How could such a corrupt church push itself so far into the center of modern civilization, with which it never had, or can ever have, any sympathy, and which it only embraces to destroy? How could a total lie administer comfort and aid to so many millions of souls? The truth is it never did fulfil the promise the priests have made in that respect, and is only a fraud and deception, and any benefit is not realized, and when too late, the deception is disclosed.

All reasonable men are ready to and do acknowledge that there is such a thing as universal truth, for indeed all truth is universal when it is apprehended aright, but there never was any such a thing as apostolic succession, except by an interior life divine and true; and the false doctrine of apostolic succession, by which the Roman Popes claim authority, has perverted and hardened the diffusive spirit of truth, into so much mechanism, and cast it into a mold in which it has been forcibly kept, and by getting progressively false, and false, as the world gets older and wiser, it is now another name, for a narrow and intolerant sectism, while the infallibility committed itself to one absurdity after another, so that in consequence, reason turns giddy, and even faith has no resource but to shut her eyes, and the apostolic succession becomes narrowed down, into a mere dynasty of priests and pontiffs, a mere hierarchy of the theological magicians, saving souls by machinery,



opening and closing the gate to the kingdom of heaven by an incantation or acrobatic performance, so intricate that the labor and study of a life time, would have been required, before Saint Peter, or Saint Paul, could understand or imitate it.

In this abyss of superstition and moral pollution, when the voice and the writings of Luther came upon it like the reverberation of thunder,, when priests and monks had adopted the employment on a large scale of selling salvation in any shape or quantity, on slips of parchment, when heaven and the grace of god were made marketable commodities, were priced and ticketed, bought and sold, till thinking men began to doubt, whether there could be any heaven or not. It was time for men of spirit and ability, as well as of honesty, to speak out against that fearful hierarchy of priests, who were preying upon the credulity of mankind. What was the real spirit and power of the Lutheran protest against Romanism, for it is evident that it was not creed against creed in the beginning at all; but it afterwards developed into that; but at first it was only the uprising of the human heart and conscience against both the ecclesiastical absurdities and immoralities. What a wonderfully immoral, but yet a very profitable traffic which these priests of Romanism carried on with the relics of the dead. It cunningly seized upon one of the strongest cords of human nature, for although we must call such an emotion a superstition, yet there is in nearly all natures, a profound feeling at the bottom of this veneration for relics. How often do we see and not without a feeling of at least sympathy, some sensitive natures weeping over a lock of hair, which belonged once to a departed friend, and with what loving devotion the heart clings to the slightest thing, that brings back to us the remembrance of a name once hallowed in our affections, but the coarsest human nature revolts at the imposture of a spurious relic, and the Roman church has many thousand such relics, as the finger nail from the hand of Saint Peter, a bit of the worm that never dies, preserved in spirits, a quill from the cock that crowed at the crucifixion, the holy coat at treves, pieces of the real cross, and others equally groundless relics, which have been a prolific source from which to realize a rich revenue; and these have never been verified, and need not be.

Now, who shall, or can, compute the stupifying and brutalizing effect of such a religion? Who will dare say, that a principle that so debases reason and judgment is not in its effects like bands of iron around the expanding heart and struggling limbs of freedom? Who will dare tell the world that this terrible church does not lie upon the bosom of all past time, since it first arose, and upon the present time, like a vast unwieldy and offensive corpse, crushing the life blood out of

the body of modern thought and modern civilization alike? It is not merely as a religious creed that we are looking at this thing. It is not as a religious or theological speculation or for its theological sins, that we are here to condemn it; but it is its effect upon civilization and political and social freedom that we are discussing, for what must be the ultimate political night that settles on a people who are without individuality of opinion, and independence of will; and whose brains are thus by such a process made tools of, and put in the hands of a clan or order of priests. It is only necessary to look over there into the sad state of Europe, and into Mexico and South America, to see it all. See, in the past and present degraded condition of the Catholic element in every place where its sway is unopposed, it marks itself with night, and drags the soul and energies, and the freedom of the people backwards, and downwards into political and social inaction, into the unfathomable quagmire of death. It leaves its unholy marks even upon the soil, upon industry, upon every resource of national and individual greatness, and also upon the very faces of a people, where submission and ignorance are enthroned, and over the crushed and degraded intellect. In all Catholic countries on the face of the globe, the jail is greater than the schoolhouse; the hospital for the infirm, than the means of self-support and self-respect.

The foregoing thoughts, naturally lead to the subject of liberty, which may for our present purpose be confined to religious liberty, or freedom of not only thought, but the liberty unrestrained to cultivate such religious sentiments and beliefs, as have so impressed our reason as to compel the reason to give its assent to its importance, with the view of further investigation, or to be convinced of its truth or reality, and in addition to ourselves having received such truth, liberty to instruct others, to such an extent as our opportunities and abilities admit of, without any interference by outside restraint, or the apprehension of any, by any ecclesiastical authority whatever, which when fully realized, would abolish all organized systems that require rules and regulations, and creeds, to which, whether willing or not, the victim has been obliged by force or fear to attach and form one of their number; for all systems which have appeared among those where his lot has been cast, and this result has been made not only possible, but obligatory, by the circumstances of their being born and reared, where such instruction as they were permitted to receive, had a direct tendency to create, and also to foster and perpetuate superstitious reverence, for usages and beliefs entertained by their predecessors, to such an extent as to deprive them of any opportunity, or even so much as a desire to inquire into any other system.

The inventors of all systems at the outset, were so far removed from the present time in the distant past, that their predecessors had scarcely emerged from the savage state into the barbarous condition, before an attempt was made to find a mode to explain the most simple operations of nature's laws, such as sunrise and sunset, day and night, heat and cold, and such simple explanations were more impossible, and so far beyond their capacity to understand or explain, that many ages of progress and experience must have elapsed, before the weak intellects had become able to grasp even a theory, much less look for a demonstration. But constant increase in mental capacity by using experience of former generations, finally reached a point where the futile or unsuccessful attempts of the most gifted intellects then to be had, groped along the dark path, in search of light enough to reveal a faint conception of a supernatural cause, behind or before every event, but the cause was as far beyond the ability of the most gifted intellect to conceive at that time, any more certain than a guess, as it always since has been, and will always continue to be, but for a people just a step removed from barbarism to a semi-civilized state, a system of religion, or what was supposed to be capable of developing in the succeeding ages into such a system, was for the first time introduced, and by long, patient, persistent and persevering effort, finally after many experiments and failures reached a point, where organization was possible and practicable, and Judaism, in a crude form, was in a recent era, made possible and from an imperceptible germ of ignorance and error, a beginning was made of a system of falsehood and fraud, which after the struggles and vicissitudes of many thousands of years, is still at present in existence, and has never in all its history been anything but a curse and fraud on all who have been its victims; its defects which were revealed by experience were so far removed, that spurious Christianity of the last fifteen hundred years has derived its precarious and unworthy existence from it. This bastard spurious parentage, could produce no better children than its own unworthy origin made possible. They were an ignorant, semi-civilized people, who were in the midst, or surrounded on all sides by more enlightened nations than themselves, when some from their ablest and best minds had arrived at so advanced a period of acquired knowledge, that he thought himself capable to invent an explanation, to transmit to his own, and future generations, the origin of the world and all it contains; and explain, not only the way all visible objects had been produced, but also the being who produced it, and the time when the work was begun, the length of time required, the articles made, and the rest from labor of the maker; who was exhausted by so much effort as to never resume labor again.

This first writing, was the crude, imperfect outline of the complicated

machine of the Jewish system, which from time to time required repairs and improvement from later and more able inventors, and writers, and its defects which were revealed by experience were so far removed, that an end of improvement was reached, and perfect order and adaptation to the wants of the then existing nation that nothing further was either desired or expected, and that which we now have, and have been assured by those who transmitted it to us was a revelation from the one God of the Jews, through the medium of inspired or divinely instructed men, was all that was, is, or ever would be required as a guide for human conduct, till the end of time. The absurdity of this whole scheme of deception and imposture, was never discovered by the successors of its authors, and received sanction and endorsement by the highest authority, so that its continuance was practicable and necessary, as an ambitious rival for the systems of those among whom these early Jews had their home, and with whom they were in constant conflict, but were never able to either terrify or to exterminate, or force to adopt their civilization, or their religion.

The separation and isolation of the people who afterwards were named Israelites, and still later Jews, made them in a measure obliged to invent and adopt a peculiar form of religious belief, and practice ceremonies invented by the priests, wherein one god only, and he the invisible author of all visible nature, and nature's, laws, selected and instructed their principal originator and ancestor, Abraham, how to find an unoccupied region, in which to begin to develop a nation, over whom he would exercise a special protection and care, and abandon the care of all other of his children in their favor; and instruct them how to worship and serve him, and let the devil have the rest of humanity, and see what could be made of them in comparison with this nation he chose, in and through whom he would guide and govern the world. The mode introduced and adopted and made permanent is still in force among that people, and has been copied by the Christian, and all other religions, which is intellectual slavery and spiritual bondage of the masses, with the addition of brutal ignorance and superstition, thereby depriving the people of what is the most valuable possession any people can have. This condition is none the less deplorable because these who have thus been robbed are too stupid to be aware of their condition, and too indifferent to care to exchange it for another, where unrestrained exercise of reason alone is their privilege and guide, for insensibility is the favorable condition for any species of oppression and robbery to be easily perpetrated, by those whose instincts and superior endowments cause them to gain and maintain such an ascendancy over their victims, that they can both rule and rob them with impunity. A



perfect equality on any large scale among human beings is not to be expected, and is not necessary in order to have all equally entitled to individual right, to liberty, to both the free exercise of the reason, with which he is endowed to think and express his thoughts, and a denial of the right to, by force, interfere with this right.

The great evil connected with every form of religion, but more especially with the Christian form, is found in the desire and determination of its authors and their successors, who always have and still do sustain the self-appointed position of priests of various grades, to, by force and fraud, deception and imposition, compel all mankind to also do their bidding, and believe as they direct them, instead of as they themselves would otherwise do, if left free to think and act without their instruction or interference, for no human being that ever existed, has any better facilities to ascertain or to predict what is beyond this life, than any other one of his associates has, and any assumption of such a right to influence by force or fraud, ought to have been in the past, and should be in the present, met with a stern refusal to be either persuaded or forced to believe, what his reason whether feeble or strong, tells him is absurd and impossible, but the cunning whelps who have always led and guided this imposition, have always seen that the reason must be both blinded by ignorance, and be perverted by superstition, and if too stubborn to be led by persuasion, or too indifferent to listen to instruction. force was to be added to fraud, and compulsion must compel those who were indifferent to both listen and heed such instruction, as the priests choose to give. This instruction was by these priests, pretended to be derived direct from a book in their possession, of which God was the author, and which had been transmitted to them, and by them translated into their own language.

The original authors of this God revealed book, pretended to have been the scribes or secretaries, through whom the one God they worshipped transmitted, or directed them what to write, and consequently it must be not only free from error, but must be in its literal teaching accepted and observed by all people, through all future time, and also its instructions and commandments were to be communicated through the medium of an educated priesthood to the common people, and the consequence has been, that a half civilized people of a long previous age, living in the infancy of the development of learning, and knowing nothing of science, and very little about art, have succeeded in imposing on so much of the human race as have come under the influence of the Jewish and Christian instruction,, so profound a conviction of the truth of their claim of divine inspiration, that at the present time the Christian theologians assert, and enforce this claim, with all the energy that the

most profound belief is capable of producing. Very little stress is laid upon the old testament by Christians, in building their system, except in the historical and prophetic parts, the miraculous and moral are for the most part reproduced in the new testament, and the doctrinal features of the Christian system are nearly the whole, the inventors of the successive grades of ecclesiastical theologians who have flourished in recent times, and they have been so filled with bigotry and superstition, that they have always failed to see that intellectual uniformity is nowhere possible, and failing to realize this fact, they have applied force to the physical frame, to compel the intellect to believe any absurdity and imposition, the most ingenious fanatic could invent, and failing to convince the reason that one is three, and three is one, the argument of the thumb screw is applied.

What is a thumb screw? It is two little pieces of iron, attached together by screws or bolts, of a shape to fit the thumbs, and when some man or woman said, he or she did not believe the story of Jonah and the whale, which says that the whale swallowed Jonah to save him from drowning, then they put these two pieces of iron on his thumb, and then these priests who love their neighbors as themselves, began screwing these two pieces of iron together, for the purpose, as they tell him, of calling his attention to the subject, and when he suffers the agony of the damned, he says, write out what you want me to believe, one god or three hundred, or what not, and I will sign it, but stop this torture, but now and then they found a brave soul who would not yield up his reason, and then these gentlemen who were all forgiveness, or at least their master taught them to be, screwed this machine down to the last thread. Such is the Christian idea of liberty. Another instrument of torture, to compel uniformity of belief was, the one called the scavenger's daughter, or an iron collar full inside of sharp points, which fastened on the neck of the one who was too stubborn to be convinced by an appeal to reason, that the sun and moon stood still at the command of General Joshua, so that he might slaughter a few thousand more of his fellow men, when his reason enlightened by science, which told him the earth revolved on its axis, so rapid that the stop of a second would not only destroy both armies, and also the earth itself, refused to believe this untrue statement, the collar was then applied, and the result was slow torture, till death by suffocation came to the relief of the victim. This has been the fate of many, who could not, and would not, to avoid such a fate, sign the name to such a fraud; and this was done in the name of him who said, if smitten on one cheek turn the other, and also for spreading the gospel of eternal love and benevolence among all men.

Now, in view of what has been the reason why this force has been used, to produce a uniform belief of what has since been proved to always have been a lie, is it not monstrous, that the Christian church now not only justifies and approves what was done in the primitive church, but would repeat the same methods to produce uniformity as their ancestors did, if they could get the power, but their methods are now little if any better than they formerly were, but the worst methods of the past are yet to be delineated. The rack was used. What was the rack? An iron frame supplied with a windlass and crank, with chains to attach to the wrists and ankles, so that when the crank was turned, the limbs were stretched apart, so as to dislocate the sockets and produce intense agony, but a little short of death; with a physician standing by to feel his pulse. What for; to save his life? Yes. What for; for mercy? No, but simply that they might have the pleasure of racking him again. And this was done from the best of motives, in the name of universal love and forgiveness, not done simply to one or two hundred, but to hundreds of thousands, and this is only a beginning of the fruits of religious frenzy, and superstition by the highest sanction, and in compliance with the imperative command of the Pope himself, for the good of the victim. What a prodigious mistake somebody has made, which would now be repeated by the same authority for the same reason, if the power to do it was not wanting.

For what reason did John Calvin cause a better man than himself to be burned alive, by the name of Michael Servitus, in as recent a time as the latter part of the sixteenth century? Because he called the Lord Jesus Christ, son of the eternal God. When Calvin commanded him to say, eternal son of God, and his sense of propriety caused him to refuse to yield his freedom, to regard Christ as merely the son of the eternal God, and not god the father, and for that only was Michael Servitus made fast to an iron post or stake, and burnt alive by a slow fire of green wood and when the wind blew the dull flames somewhat away from his body, so that his sufferings were thus lengthened, he cried out to his merciful tormentor, Calvin, who was standing by rejoicing in his sufferings, to put the wood on the other side, that he might the sooner die, and Calvin and the savage crew who were there to do his bidding, refused to grant him his request, but looked on and derisively laughed at his helpless condition; but in the midst of flame and smoke he, true to his firm conviction, said, what many others before and since have said when near death, by violence, without any notice being taken of any such a request, Christ, Eternal son of God, have mercy upon me. Such is religious liberty as it is understood by Christians, a more inhuman set of savages was never found on earth, and the bigoted fanatic would

do the same to-day, if the hellish disposition was not restrained by a want of power; and it is actually being nursed and is put in force, so as to cause hatred, contempt and exclusion, to be felt by the priesthood of every form of Christianity, towards those who dare to question the truth of any of their theories, and it is consequently enough to know of any religious man his belief, to know also what point he has reached intellectually; and what his brain is worth to him or to the world.

A man with a great brain will not have a mean and selfish religion, for such is only fit for the savage, who lives in a cave, or who sails over the river or lake in a canoe, dug out of a tree, which he deems to be sufficient, and scorns the idea of any improvements on it. As civilization advances, with or without reference to religion of any or every kind, a demand springs up for improvement, in all directions where improvement is possible; and we want a better sailing craft than a dug out, and we want better music than he of the dug out could furnish, and we want better books, than such as were once, for want of better materials, written on leaves of trees, on the shoulder blades of sheep, or on the skins of wild beasts, or even on vellum or parchment; for when we compare such rude methods of preserving records, or of transmitting information with the illustrated periodicals of our day, with what was satisfactory to the ancients, living in caves and tents, we have no desire to be remanded back to their era; and in sculpture, such images as are found, which were the rude efforts of the best artists of the time of the dug out, which attempted to give expression of the idea of God, derived from a previous mythology, having five or six heads, many ears, and many rows of eyes, and then compare these with the best specimens of Greek sculpture, whose models were so perfect, that it was considered, that an introduction was necessary to give the beholder the right to speak to them; and extend the same comparison to painting, or architecture, and to nearly all branches of science or learning, immense progress has been made; but how is it in religion? The world has held out all the inducements, all the rewards in its possession, to get an improved religion. But the religious priest and fanatic, who always had control of this mechanism, said No! That fellow in the dug out had a religion, derived from his priest, who in turn traced his authority back to God's throne, which was orthodox. It had not God alone for a foundation, for it had also a personal, real devil, and the conception of this God, or this devil, has never been so much as imagined possible to be improved upon; and no improvement is either expected or desired.

The miserable Christian bigot says, that his religion, which sends at least ninety-five out of every hundred of the human race to an endless hell of torment, is good enough, and cannot be made more satisfactory,



and they term all who as much as question its origin or quality, ignorant blasphemers. The world has said in the past, give us better ships, better music, better cloth, better books, better everything; and the world has long said, and it yet says, give us a better religion, one that produces better results, for notwithstanding many superior advantages, are found under a Christian so-called civilization; and it is traced to other causes than a religious cause, there is not found on the earth, one form, where so great, both in quantity and degree of vice is found, as in Christian lands; and goes wherever Christianity goes, to neutralize and corrupt such feeble moral precepts as the Christian missionary seeks to give them, in exchange for a system which they have, and which is satisfactory, and in fact much preferable to this.

No imagination is strong enough to characterize in language adequate, the impudence of any human being, claiming the right to think for himself, who will not concede it to other people, who are as well qualified to judge of its truth, or value as he is. If I have not the right who has? Can I get the right by uniting with a few other people in building a little church, with a steeple pointing the soul to heaven; and a bell in it? If each individual has not the right of private judgment, then combined they have not the right. If each individual being on the whole earth has not the equal right of every other to think, then the whole world must be denied the right to his thoughts. All we skeptics claim as a right, is, to be honest with himself and not pretend to others because it is expedient to do so, that he believes what he does not, for then he is like the hypocrite. There was once in my experience a gentleman, apparently, a nice man and a minister, who asked me in public, what kind of quality of wine it was that Jesus made out of water, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, whether or not it would produce intoxication. I replied I did not believe there ever was any wine made at all out of water, or any other way. Then you do not believe the Bible, for, it says there was; for surely any being who could, and did many times raise the dead, could surely make wine from water. I say the dead never was, and they never will be raised, was my reply to that. And such a tirade of abuse as followed this admission, and such a reply, was a lesson to that audience that will never be matched or forgotten. Suppose I go to Turkey, or Arabia, and the Mahometan priest hands me a Koran, and says to me read it, and I read it, carefully, and they ask me, do you believe it? What ought I to say to preserve my manhood, if I did not believe it, no matter whether I wanted office in Turkey or not? Why, of course you will say to me, say to the Turkish priest boldly, you do not believe it to be anything but the wild dream of an ignorant fanatic, who had both the ambition and ability to impose

on an ignorant rabble, and to begin a new religion, and his success is no proof of either its truth or value, and it never had any better origin than in his feeble and fanatical brain, and that of others who were his associates in this fraud. Well then, when I am in the United States of America, and read carefully and thoroughly the book the Christian priest hands me, which he tells me is divinely inspired revelation, directly emanating from the living God, and when I get through and do not believe it, what shall I say? The people among whom I live and whose good opinion I highly prize, for I agree with them on most other questions, say to me, you had best say nothing; for it will be better for both you and us if you keep still. This I reply is intellectual slavery. I prefer freedom to comfort, and when you destroy the liberty of mind, it has the same effect on the progress of the world, as it would have on the progress of the Mississippi river, if you destroy all the streams that empty into it; and if you could destroy all the fountains that feed the oceans, they would become sand; so it is with the information of the world; it comes from individual brains, they are the springs and fountains, that have prevented as far as the church would permit, mental stagnation; and it is the imperative duty, and ought to be his privilege, to tell all he knows, but nothing he don't know, that he may thus add to the sum of human knowledge, to which all have contributed, and from which all may draw. If there is a heaven, and in it an infinite being or god, he never was, and he never will be satisfied, with the worship and adoration of cowards and hypocrites. Honest unbelief will and should be a perfume in heaven, and hypocrisy, no matter how religious it may seem to be outwardly, will, and ought to be a stench intolerable, and that is all there is to it.

Give every other human being all the chance to think and express his thoughts you claim for yourself, and keep your minds free and open to the voices and demands of nature, to new ideas, to new thoughts, originating with yourself or others, and to improve upon your former beliefs, or doctrines whenever you can. But in advancing we are beginning to hold all kinds of slavery of the mind in contempt, and abhorrence, we are beginning to question wealth and power; we also are beginning and threatening to demolish as well as question, all creeds and dogmas, and we in free America are not bowing down to a man as we used in former times to do, simply because he is dressed in the robe of a priest, or a king, or titled, or even rich. Every thinking man is simply amazed, when he thinks of how much every people in past ages has suffered on account of his feeling of inferiority, and unworthiness to hold up his head in the presence of his associates, who, in every sense were no better than himself, for when you look back a few years,

you see the most highly civilized and Christianized two nations on the earth, in the full participation, in both the possession and the procuring millions of negroes, who were held, after being stolen and sold to the masters in the most horrible and abject slavery the world has ever seen, for it was not till eighteen hundred and eight, that England and the United States of America abolished the slave trade, as far as lawful traffic in slaves who were imported, was concerned.

Up to that time, the judges in both countries, who sat upon the bench in the name of justice and right conduct, between man and man; the priests occupying the pulpits and preaching universal love and good will, owned stock in slave ships, and participated and luxuriated in the profits of piracy and murder. The United States, while compelled to abolish the slave trade between this and other countries, preserved between the states by that infernal law called the Fugitive slave law, the most diabolical traffic in slave breeding, kidnapping, and in selling kidnapped negroes who were enticed into the slave states and seized, and sold, and this ungodly traffic was aided, abetted, encouraged and excused, by the most holy orthodox ministers; and it was not until the first day of January, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, that President Abraham Lincoln put away from our flag, the stigma and disgrace of slavery. And still, after thirty years of legalized freedom of all slaves, the rascally priests, and former slave owners, have conspired together to deny every right to the blacks, that both force and fraud can invent; and this is all done to gain a political advantage, over a party who are both willing and determined, that political freedom shall at least be universal in this free country, and lashes upon the bare back, or the withholding of religious freedom, shall no longer be the equivalent of labor performed, for labor will not always, as it has heretofore, live in a hut, that capital may live in a palace.

This denial of the right of every man to have such religious belief, as his reason requires him to have, or none at all, is all the result of priestcraft; for there never was a preist of any form of religion that was anything but an impostor, both knowingly and wilfully; and no form of religion can prove one of the fundamental doctrines on which its creed is built, but by mere assertion or assumption; and therefore one assertion of denial of the imposition of priestcraft, is just as good and true, as the affirmative assertion of the priest, it is all a useless jargon of words, and the world would have been infinitely better off, if no religion had ever been invented, and it is both the right, and duty, of every reformer, to destroy the influence of all religious instruction, as far as his ability and opportunity will permit.

Much controversy, and misapprehension is had on the subject of

matter and mind, how they are related as to priority; for both sides of the controversy agree that both matter and mind are combined to form all animal existence, and other forms of matter that are not capable of themselves of motion, are nothing more than lifeless matter. The theist to establish the existence of his God, is obliged to place him before matter, and make him immaterial, or a mere spirit or infinite uncreated mind, with the ability to create matter, and endow such matter as required such endowment with mind, to meet its wants or necessities. The atheist, on the other hand, insists that spirit, or mind, or intelligence, which ever you please to name it, is in the same need of an originator as matter needed, and if anything in more imperative need; for mind is more of an intricate and mysterious a nature than matter, and cannot be conceived or imagined when it is separated from matter, for it is absolutely unthinkable. Every form of animal life, originates in the accumulation of some form of matter, of such imperceptible minuteness, that it is scarcely perceptible or imperceptible without mechanical assistance. A mere germ, which commences to develop by accumulating and appropriating such matter as is adapted to cause it to expand and enlarge, till maturity is reached, beyond which it is impossible to go, but the germ and the embryo never has any mind or motion, till matter has been chemically provided with suitable ingredients, to spontaneously produce motion in spite of and without the assistance of its parent matter, when mind commences to develop, weak and imperceptible at first, but at birth, when ushered into a world where atmospheric air is inhaled, and its blood nourished with the elements of which the air is composed, the mind develops with the body, and also reaches its limit of expansion in all animals, but man, when the body is mature; because in a state of nature, man alone is capable of instruction by his own species, who have by experience and observation, been advanced to a condition to be able to assert, and maintain a superior position, among all animals; and also to be capable of supplying himself with such comforts and luxuries as his condition has enabled him to desire and require.

Any person who has observed the helpless and dependent condition of the human infant, is aware, that no animal is more helpless at its birth than it is, and the gradual progress of intelligence, is wholly due to the sustaining nourishment derived from matter, but its superiority over other animals, comes from its capacity to receive and retain impressions from surrounding objects, which impress, and at the same time instruct, so as to gradually raise the human animal above all others, in some, but not in all directions. One of the reasons and may be the only reason why the human animal is sufficiently intelligent to



dominate and control all other animal life is the development of the intellectual faculty, by the process of mixture of the several breeds, tribes and races of men who inhabit widely separated regions, and by a successive and long continued inter-breeding, produce some few specimens, who develop superior mental capacities, some of both sexes, so much above the general average, that in time the product of these superior specimens, are able to invent systems of government, of religion, of social and government improvement, so that after this gradual process of developing from the best specimens of humanity, in long periods of past ages, before human history begins, mental progress had produced, and have since produced individuals, so far above the general average in capacity, that they were, and are still, able to exercise enough control over the masses, to be willingly acknowledged as guides and examples of virtue and intelligence.

This process seems to have been confined to the human animal, for as far as we are at present able to ascertain, all other animals continue to be stationary, and nearly uniform from age to age, refusing to mix or amalgamate with other species, and by continual breeding in and with nearly related males and females, have a tendency to deteriorate, and finally disappear, for want of the vigor and the ability to produce their like, as well as also for want of favorable conditions. The legend recorded in the Christians' Bible, introduces to the student of history as the first specimen of a complete human pair, Adam and Eve, who, if produced at all were produced in the manner that every animal has always been produced, but they were the first to arrive at sufficient development, to find a place in history, and to propagate other individuals, who in time also secured a name and a place in the succession of several generations in history. Whether real or merely legendary every reader is at liberty unless restrained by priestly influence, to decide for himself, till finally we reach Noah, who was conspicuous enough to get the designation of preacher of righteousness, but we have no specimen of any of his sermons, which is an unpardonable oversight on the part of his biographer, but it is evident that his preaching was about as good and successful as that of the preachers had always been, for he could do no more than save himself and family from drowning, and thus save the germ, from which a new race was developed to enable the creator to try another experiment, with another human family, which under better conditions might produce better results. The first specimen of this newly organized people, who through many generations and many vicissitudes of progress had enabled them to produce one worthy to find a large place in the history of the people that afterwards claimed him for their ancestor, which we call Jews, was Abraham; signifying father of the faithful.

His history has been continued through many generations of progress and development, till finally one more conspicuous than he was, has come on the stage, whose name was Moses, signifying law giver, who discovered, and, as far as we can perceive he was the first one to make this discovery, and to profit by it, which discovery is that men, vain and fanatical, receive without difficulty the most chimerical fables and tomfooleries.

This little word eternity, for instance, though not first invented by Moses, always renders men otherwise stubborn and quarrelsome, benign and peaceful; and by this and similar means, the whole of a stupid people, are rejoiced, when they are to have the privilege to kiss the ligature by which they are strangled, and it was by such a miserable stupid lie, that Moses knew how to fix secure the restless spirit of the Hebrews of his day, and the Jews of all subsequent times, and take captive their credulity, by ranging his politic laws by the standard of the divinity, or god given, or in other words, as we call it, inspiration; for he pretended to have seen on a distant mountain, celestial visions, such as the burning bush, which burned with great fury, and yet was not consumed or even scorched; and from which the voice of God told him, to take the shoes off from his feet, when no shoes had ever been invented in many ages after his time. He gave those who were only the merest rustics to understand, and compelled them to believe, that the infinite God in his majesty and splendor, had appeared before his dazzled eyes. He showed them authentic, God made and engraved stone tables, recording his will or laws. He supported by pathetic solemn tones of a well modulated voice, as the holy priests now do, to impress the ignorant multitude who listen to their prayers, that it is a solemn privilege, to be allowed to address directly, the great creator and preserver of all things; and these tales were so well invented, that the entire people were enchanted as well as deceived by these tomfooleries, so that cunning falsehood passing for truth, and substituted for truth, firmly established the authority of that rascally impostor and legislator Moses, and has given the most unquestioned belief and currency, to all the egregious errors concerning God, by which, and through which, the world, or that portion of it which has come under its baneful influence has always been infected; and, notwithstanding all this, so much progress has now been made, that unquestioning religious belief as it has been formerly held and taught by theologians, is very nearly extinct, in at least every Christian country, and one now seldom meets a young man, who does not wish privately in his inner consciousness, to himself be included among outspoken professed atheists; but the strangest part of it all is, that the very person who wishes, he dare profess atheism in the week

days, plays outwardly the saint on the Sunday, not thinking that this is both hypocrisy and deception; especially those in the Roman church, who are there for the most part, because they were born of Catholic parents, and then trained and instructed by Catholic priests, not for a moment suspecting, that the same Roman church has always been, and now is the fertile mother of the most infernal tyranny the world has ever seen; and it is because the intellect of the great mass who comes under that abominable tyranny, are prevented from becoming mature enough to be able to throw off this tyranny, or even to so much as discover its diabolical nature.

If it is asked me, What think you then of the human soul, and of the great questions, such as eternity, or a future life, free will, and many more of like import? I reply, I think nothing, or if I have any thought upon it, or them, it is that we, poor insignificant worms, called by way of distinction humanity, are under the same power and influence, as both the stars and the mote that floats in the air, and is only made visible in the light of the sunbeams, are, and that power, whatever name you give it, I care not, whether it be God, or Nature, works by general inevitable and unchangeable laws, and not by my views or direction, or your views and wishes, entirely disregarding all such trifles as human desires, and never listens to any petition, or even adoration, wholly indifferent to either worship or blasphemy, and has only regard for truth, having made that so radiant, that it can shine by its own light. Consequently human minds never have been, and they never can be enlightened, by the flames by which the church in all its past history has vainly tried to extinguish, what science can and did always teach and demonstrate, and he who is not enlightened by the sublime truths of science, discerns both the puerility, and the foolish and criminal absurdities of all sectarian controversies, and he who is so enlightened, turns away from them, with both horror and disgust.

Religion, being altogether false, when it rages with inhuman zeal, arms every hand, and sharpens the point of every steel weapon, but to every lover of truth and freedom, and hater of imposition and tyranny, it will belong, and remain a sacred duty, to prove both these theological disputants wrong; for, of whatever names divine the disputing parties claim, either in exaggeration or craft, and many times in devilish hate to all truth, they are both the same fiends. We must all realize, sooner or later, and it can be none too soon, that our priests, and also all priests, are not what they seem to be, and are far short of what their foolish dupes imagine them to be, for they are all indebted to the credulity of mankind for all their seeming superior virtue, and have reduced theology to a seeming science, but only such in consequence of this very

credulity; for it all rests on the most unwarranted assumption as its foundation. The great fundamental mistake, or if you so please, error of mankind, in respect to religious beliefs, is found to be in the first place, regarding any book as sacred or holy; and, in the second place, in not regarding them as legends, and not history, for as mere legends they may possess to some minds some beauty, and a seeming value, as for instance; what a folly to suppose that the creator of men could not restrain them, when permitted to exercise the perfect faculties with which they were in the first place by the creator endowed, so as to entirely prevent the utter failure of the experiment, and not necessitate the extermination of the race by drowning, and then beginning in another way a new race, which turned out no better than the first experiment, and after waiting, and at infinite pains, by selecting and cultivating a nation as a model for all others, and directing them for many thousand years, in order to save the world, which was, in spite of all restraining influences, constantly growing worse, this same God who created and preserved, also cultivated, and by every means sought to improve, and finally himself died, without in any way, or in any degree succeeding in reclaiming the race from folly or wickedness, by either or both methods combined, resulting in nothing but utter hopeless failure, and if this is only treated as legend, and not as history, no great harm is done.

Many such legends are required to be treated, but only one other is worthy to find a place in this writing, and that is that astonishing, bewildering legend, which the four gospels delineate, and on which the Christian church edifice in a figurative sense is built. This legend of Christ crucified and risen, is in like manner, and for a like purpose, designedly held up by all grades of Christian priests, as history, when it is admitted by both unconfirmed, and also absolutely incredible, which is briefly in this manner. The eternal God must needs have a son, but needed no wife, by whom this son might or could be born in the usual way, so, instead he must come from an obscure people, and at a time in the history of these people, when they were not only obscure but imbecile, and unstable, insensate lovers of superstition, conquered and held in bondage and subjection by their neighbors, crouching in political slavery to them, and the loathing and contempt of all nations by whom they were known. This infinite son, of the infinite God, or God himself, so to speak, for how else can you speak with propriety, is, in this way made the countryman of this odious people, and be conceived, by, as the legend asserts, the Holy Ghost, which up to this time was never introduced among the children of men, and in a suitable time, born of a Jewish peasant virgin, unmarried maiden, and like other



infants, he creeps about his mother, and receives from her his care and nourishment; and suffers under her eyes all the infirmities of infancy and childhood; afterwards, a low mechanic; with the tools in hand that were required for his vocation, and finally for many years becomes lost, in this respectable, but in some sense considering the dignity of the subject, is a base employment. After many years, he emerges again from obscurity, but never attracts influence, or even notice from the portion of his contemporaries who were above the grade to which he belonged, and in one year is put to death, as his biographers assert, by crucifixion as a malefactor, which signifies a troublesome person, and finally rises from the grave, and is seen to go up into a cloud, in the same way as a balloon goes; and this legend there stops, for want of ability to go further, and yet the priests upon this silly legend, which has not the first element of either probability, or possibility, to give it a right to find a lodgment in any human intellect of the lowest grade, it has, under the manipulation of the priest, and does, and always will consign to eternal damnation, every individual who has ever dared to doubt any portion of this silly legend, or refuse to receive it as not only historically true, but the inspired word of God, and implicitly believe its unproved and, wholly unfounded assumptions.

Better is it, and far more sensible, to reject this fable or legend, and if you must without anything on which to found such belief, still must from analogy or any other reason, believe in a future life, and in some form of religion believe that the infinite wisdom of the most high, has, with his own hand, engraved at the bottom of thy inmost being, a natural religion; which is the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and believe, that the native candor of thy inmost conception of right and wrong, will not be the cause and object of your creator's eternal hate. Believe also, that before his throne, in all times, and in all places, and conditions, the motives and conduct of a just person, is precious, instead of believing the priest, who says it is hateful and finally believe if you must believe in a God at all, believe that he will judge of your life, by its holy virtues, instead of your foolish, worthless sacrifices, and learn also to despise both the pictured horrors of the tomb, and the hopes on the one hand, and the terrors on the other, of a future life. One of the most convincing and reasonable ways to regard the absurdities which oblige religious bigots to invent some way out of their difficulties, which they unavoidably will encounter when they attempt to reconcile the declarations of the word of God with the conflicting teaching of science, is, by holding the said absurdities up to contempt and ridicule. This mode is both proper and justifiable, as a retaliatory method, but not in any other sense.

Such an instance is found, when the aforesaid bigot is called upon by the scientist, to reconcile the account found in the beginning of Genesis, of the creation of the world and all things therein, and the whole universe besides in six literal days, by names, first, second, third, etc., days, with the indefinite geological periods, which the science of geology requires to account for the successive formations of the different strata or layer of rocks, which, one above another in regular order, form the crust of the earth, and which encloses the liquid material, from which is derived the material which escapes from volcanic eruptions. Only a few of the most advanced theological professors, even now will admit, that days as they are called in scripture may be construed to mean, indefinite periods of time, and thus they pretend to hope or expect to reconcile revelation with science, when their feeble intellect fails to perceive, or comprehend that if he is to call the term translated days in one place indefinite periods, he must also do the same in all places in which time is alluded to, either as days or years, even, and therefore those theologians who still uphold the old notion of six days, as we regard days, which is the period of one revolution of the earth, are far the most consistent, for just reflect a moment, what confusion arises when you admit that Noah had been notified of the flood one hundred and twenty years multiplied by three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, eleven minutes and fifty seconds, and call every day an indefinite period, and then have six times, as much time for the creation, and what would be the result, and then the rain, of forty indefinite periods of millions of ages each, and so on without end; Jonah in the whale, Christ in the tomb, each three millions of ages or indefinite periods. No! Gentlemen, you can't reconcile the Bible with science, for the Bible is full of error, and science is truth itself, as far, and no farther than demonstration can prove it to be true; anything less than truth is not strictly science, but science in embryo.

Another of the most foolish and absurd practice of all forms of religion, well meriting contempt, and all the ridicule possible to expose its hypocritical nature and pretensions, is the use made, and the reliance put, upon that foolish and unproductive of all the mummeries called prayer, for a prayer made by a machine, if one could be invented similar to a watch, or music box, which goes by a spring, which would recite a prayer, the result would be the same, as the same words uttered by the most gifted and sincere vocal utterance, of the most devout and falsely instructed dupe, of any rascally priests, in both cases, entirely without any value. Do you say faith is required, which no machine can have? Can faith produce rain in a rainless desert, if not, why not? Can faith cure an incurable malady, or avert pain, if the cause is not

removed like an aching tooth or broken bone either in yourself or another? A thousand times No! not if all the energy of the roaring voice of the most gifted and highly endowed intellect, should be concentrated on one object, and all the faith exercised by all the most faithful from Abraham, Moses, Christ, and Paul, down to Beecher, Talmage, and Spurgeon, could one particle of change be made, from what nature decreed.

But the praying dupe of these ungodly priests, when they fail to get any response to their petitions, and complains to the priest, and is inclined to doubt whether, after all prayer is of any use, is told to wait in hope and patience; for God has put a sure promise in writing in his holy word, meaning the Bible; which is definite and sure, in these words: "Ask and ye shall receive," putting a strong emphasis on the word "shall," and also another, "For every one that asketh receiveth," but I, in unbelief contend, that in the face of all this deception and imposition, that it is an evidence, the most positive and unmistakable that can be produced, of the most consummate imbecility, for any mortal to beg for some favor, and to promise all kinds of unreasonable obedience upon the receipt of that favor, only to make that treaty or agreement null and void, when you say, "But, O Lord, Thou knowest what is best for us, the insignificant work of thy mighty hand, and then humbly adding the words, that the Evangelist Luke says, Christ added to his prayer, when he asked his heavenly father to save his life, or to let, if possible, this cup pass from him, and then added, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." That, or a like acquiescence releases the object or being to whom the petition is addressed from all obligation of fulfilling this, or any other promise; but if any one was bold enough to make a comment like the one made above, he would expose himself to mob violence, and, in the past, in the outrageous history of the Christian church, many thousands have been burned at the stake, for a much less criticism of the beliefs and methods of the priests, and suspicion of a want of agreement in religious belief, has been enough to justify the perpetration of some of the most outrageous acts of cruelty and violence, to the best men in any age or country, for it can be fully proved, if anybody doubts the charge, that there is nothing more cruel than to be by these holy fanatics suspected of irreligion. It is an accusation from which it would be in vain to even endeavor to escape from the odium of such suspicion, and it will last as long as life itself, and when the victim has been dead hundreds of years, the bigoted successors of these fanatics, who were the contemporaries of the infidel of former times, will continue to assail his character, and blacken his memory, and retail the most outrageous lies and misrepresentations as to his

teachings, and in most cases lyingly assert that he recanted at the last moment, when it was too late.

Therefore it is necessary that extreme care and circumspection be used in the presence of these dotards called priests, to avoid their abuse and hate, for the Christian church in particular, and most likely all others, are full of priests, having eyes and tongues full of sweetness, or heaven in their eyes, and hell in their disposition and conduct, for they have always inspired and encouraged hallowed assassination, in all their religious wars, and persecutions. No characteristic of priestly craft of every species of false religion (and they are all false), is more evident than this; that the founders of all these false systems while they practice upon the docile credulity of their dupes, they at the same time despise both the dupe and his credulity, and inwardly gloat and make merry over it, for they declare in so many acts as well as in so many words, that the masses of the people, blind and feeble, are only born to admire, to believe, and to obey us; for our spirits, vast and firm in their structure and designs, have a natural right to domineer over the dull, stupid souls of common men.

Your first and only duty, rash and inconsiderate men, is, to believe us teachers to you, of Christianity, without either thought or question, for to deliberate, or hesitate, is rank sacrilege. The priest, in his acts, and also in his words, is something after this style: Let no mortal but us be bold enough to judge of divine truth, or even read it for themselves, or attempt to use their mental eyes or reason, for whoever dares to investigate, or even think, is not fit to be my disciple; your whole duty is to obey in silence. Do you know who and what I am? or from what source I got my right and authority to instruct you in the commands of heaven? Calvary is a sacred spot. Do you know for what reason? I tell you no lie when I say to you, it is because Christ Jesus died there, and from there was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven. Believe me, because I have received this information from the unproved assertion, of an unknown gospel writer, but as he wrote from divine direction, as I assert, but can't prove, to doubt you should not only be stoned to death, but eternally damned.

If such a story is related as a mere legend, I admit its use as a figure, but if it is related as history or fact, I deny its truth, and demand proof adequate to produce conviction, for I am most clearly, and also confidently of the opinion, that it is every one's duty to think with their own minds, and having done that, to believe only what is either distinctly and clearly proved, or is in harmony with the known nature of things, and having done this themselves, to concede the same right to all men without reserve or restraint. Very few people are aware what an intol-



erable burden, as well as an unnecessary nuisance it is, to be obliged to find the means to support in idleness and luxury, such an army of priests as the Roman Catholic church alone has always required and had, and now has to conduct the intricate machinery, ecclesiastical, of that one branch of the Christian church. The last United States census reveals the startling fact, that although there are one hundred and sixty-seven separate branches of the Christian church in the United States, the Roman branch alone, has more priests of the various grades than all others combined, when their adherents are not one-third of the whole number. This result is vastly exceeded in Europe, for history no further back than the beginning of the eighteenth century, in seventeen hundred and twenty-two, the Duchess of Marlborough writes from Flanders, to her friends in England, as follows: "Life of Voltaire, page 149." "My time is passed in this place, for the most part, in visiting nunneries and churches, where I have heard of such marvels, and seen such ridiculous things, as would appear to you incredible if I should attempt to describe them, it is so much beyond what I ever saw or heard of in England, of that religion which, I am sure, has made all the Atheists that are in the world, for it is impossible to see all the abuses of these priests, without raising strange thoughts in one's mind, for in one church where I was lately, there were twenty-seven jolly-faced priests, that had nothing in the world to do, but to say mass for the living, and to take the dead souls the sooner out of purgatory by their prayers." What a repulsive picture this is, but it is only a sample, and one of the best samples that might be unearthed. If convents and monasteries could be investigated, and their secrets disclosed; a tale of horrors would be revealed too shocking to virtue and modesty, to be credible.

It was no doubt a very sad day for that portion of the human race that has been made aware of that imposition called Christianity, when that being they call Christ was born, if ever he was born, and if not, still more sad, for those who claim to be authorized to declare the commands of heaven and to be the interpreters of the divine will. I mean the theologians, because they are the most dangerous class of all, when considered as a body or in the aggregate, for it may be conceded without doubt, there are some few in so large a number, who desire to be upright and honest, but their number is so small when compared to the whole, that their influence is imperceptible. The great body of theologians, are as dangerous, and as pernicious to society, as they are obscure in their ideas; and that means much; and in addition to all that, their little souls are so puffed up with pride and envy, that they are entirely destitute of either truth or candor, for they would disturb, and, if possible, distract the peace of the earth, for an abstraction or a soph-

ism, and would compel all the kings of the earth, to avenge by sword and fire, the honor of the weak argument, about a subject of no importance whatever. Every thinking being who is not of their way of thinking is by them called an Atheist, and every king who does not favor them will and ought to be eternally damned. They deserve to be all abandoned as enemies of the race. Their words, when they are disregarded are lost in the air, but when the weight of authority is enlisted in their support, their empty wind, sometimes, in the past, has acquired a force sufficient to overturn thrones and dynasties, and prevent their reorganization, till such concessions were made to them as they chose to demand. The shrewd sagacity of the theologians in the early history of this free country, politically so, at least, discovered, that on account of negligence on their part, the acknowledgment of God in the constitution had been omitted, and they have never been able to correct that blunder of theirs, and never will be, for every year diminishes the prospect of success, but they have atoned in some measure for that first neglect, by, in the state constitutions of some states, incorporating such a God clause, and also have procured the enactment of many laws in their favor in some states, such as exemption of church property from taxation, a scheme of robbery, that obliges the poor dupe, who gave out of his hard earnings at the urgent and the persistent solicitation of the priest, the money with which these were built, to also pay a tax on his poor home, larger by the sum so exempted by this unjust law, from what it would have been if the church property had been included in the general assessment, and this extortion is justified when the poor man complains, in the lying assurance that what he gives the church is treasure laid up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, or thief like this priest steal.

Another cunningly devised law, making it a crime to break the Sabbath, designed in part to operate with severity on the Jews, to compel them to either suspend business two days every week, or else adopt the first day of the week instead of the seventh, in which to worship God. And for another, and that the main reason, to oblige those who felt the need of religious instruction, to attend church in a body, and be taught in a wholesale manner, such teaching as the priest might deem suitable for them to have. These same hypocrites, who look with approbation on and gladly patronize the street car service, because they can reach church in a comfortable way, by using and profiting by the work of the street car operatives, look with holy horror on a poor newsboy, who is endeavoring to earn a few pennies by the sale of Sunday papers, and trying in every mean way, by advising church people to not patronize them, and so diminish their sales, and in some cases com-

elling them to stop, when their sole object was, to try to get them into the Sunday-school to there be instructed that the Sabbath day is too holy, and sacred to admit of its being used for the advance of any secular interest. It is wonderful to the thoughtful mind, not tainted or influenced in even a slight degree by superstition, to witness the inconsistencies that a belief in the supernatural inevitably cause the well meaning, and in some respects, intelligent individuals, who allow themselves to be influenced by, and to some times indulge in, not apparently seeing their conduct to be inconsistent with their profession, being blinded by self-interest, so as to overlook the important fact, that most of their scruples are the result of the training they have received from their ancestors, and who in turn also received from their ancestors similar instruction, and so on back into a remote past, when circumstances and conditions were such, as to in some sense, justify such practices and beliefs as are now entirely unsuited to a different condition. Every thoughtful person who will allow his reasoning faculties full exercise, can, without difficulty, trace the most of the, to him, abhorrent ceremonies and beliefs back into a remote past, and by study of history of peoples and institutions as they then existed, find a valid reason or a reason satisfactory to those who hold these abhorrent opinions which, while it has no other merit than its antiquity, is still clung to with tenacity.

To a rude and semi-barbarous and stupid imbecile people the force of habit will be indulged in and transmitted to their posterity till these habits and usages will in time become laws, and seem to be a binding force to restrain and guide human wills, and at this point the leaders and reformers, or in other words, the priests of that period guide the multitudes into these paths which their sacred feet have trod so hard for the multitude that to walk in them is easy and agreeable, and, in a little while they are both unwilling and incapable of walking in any other, their thoughts being too weak to examine as to quality, become fixed in such dogmas and doctrines, as these priests have decreed are the most suitable both for the people and themselves to have prevail, and these doctrines, untrue and inconsistent as they always are, finally harden into creeds, and thoughtless habits of worship finally grow into rites, ceremonies finally ripen into sacraments, and then the piles of convenient costly buildings become cathedrals, temples, or fanes, which are dedicated by these priests to become the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost, and therefore too sacred and awful to be trod by any but consecrated and devout feet and are the repositories of shrines and images, pictures and statuaries, and these are transmitted to succeeding generations becoming permanent, and in addition to all this the books, these primitive people heard read, in these sanctuaries, by their priests, who

alone could read, or had books, became in time, holy books, or the Holy Bible, the only books they ever had, then so become holy to their apprehension, and they were instructed to so regard them, hence in no very long time that which was at first floating and transient, changeable and visionary, became stable, chronic and everlasting, and what at first was a dream of the priests, became a fixed reality, which brings us to a time when all over the world, minds capacious or narrow, wills strong and lofty, or weak and groveling, souls aspiring or humble, bend the knee, bow the head, lift up the hands in the old accustomed way, and have not a thought that it is anything but the will of God and his command that they should do it. The one book becomes above every other holy and supreme and thus the Bible retires every other form of literature to the shade of secular inferiority, and the great building, the church of the Christian, the temple of the Pagan, towers supreme over all other edifices, and in them the guesses at truth, the surmises, the conjectures which men, more or less wise, more or less bigoted and prejudiced have ventured to put forth as divine truth, are accepted, are repeated and recited in the form of liturgies, confessions and creeds, by kneeling millions of men and women over the whole world. Institutions, such as these, originating in the way these have and becoming as fixed and impregnable as these are, never reason, never justify themselves and never make any apology for possible errors, never plead and never argue or explain, but always impudently boast that they only have the truth passed along to them from antiquity, and there they are, they stand, they exist and stand firm, and this is their only guarantee of authority to be, they prevail by the attribute of stability alone, their greatest force is in their persistency. How wonderful to us moderns is the power and influence of antiquity. Simply to have lasted a few only, of the vast generations of time, is to acquire a mysterious and an awful power over the average human mind, when it is reinforced by the persuasive eloquence of the divinely so-considered authorized priests, which it cannot throw off, for the simple reason that they do not desire to throw it off as things now are.

This Bible which has been read by many millions of men for a thousand years or about that long, is to these millions the inspired book, the articulate word of God, and such usages as the burial of the dead, confirmation preparatory to the eucharist or Lord's supper, and marriage of the sexes which has been solemnized by millions of men and women, becomes in time sacramental to such an extent that simply to go through the form becomes both sacramental and satisfying to all, and besides, if there is any one thing about which every rational or being possessed of the gift of reason should be entirely satisfied, that



thing undoubtedly is his eternal destiny, when this short life is over, or in other words, does his mature intellect uninstructed, enable him to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the existence of many gods, or simply and only one god or finally of no god at all. Every atheist is compelled to find a solution of a cause adequate to produce matter, because matter exists and is a manifest fact and the impostors who invented the absurd manner to account for the origin of simply this small dust of matter called earth, was obliged to invent a producing cause without going back of that cause to find a first cause, which leaves the whole question as far from a satisfactory solution as it was at first, for it is just as difficult if not more so to find a first cause than any succeeding one, and therefore the theist starts with an assumption and proceeds as though everybody would unhesitatingly concede his premises, and he proceeds to elaborate a theory when his premises are wholly unsupported, and not even as much as attempted to be proved, and when the atheist asks him where he found authority to start such an untenable theory he immediately falls back on his Bible assertion of the manner that creation was brought out of a chaotic state and reduced to its condition as we behold it and says, that the Bible is inspired, which is another unproved assumption, and must ever remain one, and consequently the atheist is left without any other resource but to find some satisfactory way of his own to get out of the difficulty, and while he does not put it forth as anything inspired, or perhaps not more certain than probability, it is confessedly more reasonable than the uninspired assumption of the Bible, because that experiment, as far as man and animals was concerned, was a failure, and a repetition of the experiment is no better than the first one was, and the race, as a whole are doomed to a future life of eternal damnation all but about five per cent. which Christianity asserts will be saved through his (Christ's) vicarious atonement. It will be cheerfully conceded by the atheist that such existence in its majestic grandeur and infinitude as is revealed by astronomy, and other kindred sciences, is indeed awe inspiring, and incomprehensible, also bewildering, mysterious and absolutely beyond human solution, yet it must also be conceded that its existence (unlike that of a God) is a self-evident fact, a reality beyond cavil or dispute, and which in turn proves that such existence in its elemental form or in the form of its constituents is eternal, and therefore it is more reasonable to affirm or to assume the eternity of the known than the unknown, because cosmic (or that which is real) existence requires no proof for it is seen, and can be studied, analyzed, and to a greater or less extent understood, and is self-evident here, there and everywhere, and this universal conception of the existing material, universe, should alone be

absolute and sufficient proof to all the world that such existence is eternal that it never was caused, never began, and hence never needed a god to create or a first cause, to cause what is visible, or any designer to design it, therefore there is only one definite and correct answer to the favorite taunt or inquiry of the theist, "Whence came it?" and that answer is, It never came. It is eternal because it exists, that one simple fact proves its eternal existence, and therefore for the theist to say and insist that there was a time when the universe did not exist implies the absurdity that nothing after being and remaining nothing during all the ages of beginningless time prior to the beginning assumed by the Bible writer, suddenly produced from itself or from nothing an infinite universe, and he by this reasoning forgets to mention that nothing is only nothing and must always remain nothing, for it possesses no powers or potency to produce, even during an eternity the most imperceptible atom much less a universe. If then at any time in the past nothing had existed, nothing would now exist. The foregoing we know for certain, there is no room for assumption or doubt, it is real beyond cavil or criticism. On the contrary we know absolutely nothing about a God and no two original thinkers, no two idealists or theologians, however learned or celebrated, have the same ideas concerning such a being or power, and all definitions of such a thing or creature as are entertained by the various nations, sects or tribes, vary as much as does humanity itself, and the most gifted theologian and the most illiterate peasant, in addressing through prayer this mysterious being, which his fancy has created, has the same indefinite understanding who and what he is addressing, and where it resides and they are both alike blindly groping, without ever getting, or even expecting any response, or even recognition, therefore why do not these silly dupes of superstition conclude with us atheists, that all attempts to solve the problem of the existence of the universe by inventing a God as a first cause or creator, must and will ever remain abortive efforts of childish reasoning, and a lamentable failure for all it does is to divest the visible all of, and invests the invisible all, with the potency to cause all phenomena we observe in nature.

Do you silly reasoners not see that a first cause, or as you say God, implies an infinite something of which you know absolutely nothing, possessing powers and attributes superior to those existing in nature and amply sufficient to cause to spring into existence from pre-existing nothing, miraculously an infinite universe. It also implies that such first cause, or as the theist says God, prior to the (imaginary) beginning, was not a cause, but eternally inactive, latent, nonproductive, in the most absolute condition of negation, and that such cause during all the

infinite cycles of ages which preceded such beginning, did not produce a solitary effect, and it further implies that after being eternally inactive, and the cause of absolutely nothing during all the ages of beginningless time, he or it did suddenly and miraculously so stupendously change his or its characteristics, as that he or it created the universe, and last, but not least it presents to thinking men and women, at least, to those who are free to think without bias or prejudice, the following grotesque proposition. The universe exists, consequently a God or "first cause" must have preceded it, and this "first cause," is eternal, never was created and never needed a creator.

Six thousand years ago, or thereabouts, as the Bible chronology has it computed, this "first cause," or God, created, or if you prefer, the word caused the universe to come forth into being or visibility, out of nothing. No other cause existed with or beside it, or him, prior to this time. That performance recorded in Genesis was the absolute and only beginning of the heavens and the earth. Until then, it, or he alone, monopolized all space and all time. During all the ages prior to this recent beginning of time, it, or he, did not cause either a world or a sun, moon, star, man, or animal, vegetable, mineral or even a single atom. Eternal darkness reigned here, there and everywhere. Such is a correct statement of the theists' argument, which the atheist must either refute or admit, both Jewish and Christian sentiments, and conception of the true God is identical, and this conception has had undisputed and universal possession of the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mahometan nations of the whole world for the entire six thousand years since it first was invented, for it is not a revelation, in any sense, but a mere invention, and no thinking mind of all the past has dared, or even wished to try to dispute this unproved assumption till he who now writes these lines has ventured to dispute and refute this unfounded imposition, for so far as he is aware, no atheist has adopted this mode of reasoning, and he has the vanity, if you please to call it, by that name, that his position is unassailable, and his arguments unanswerable, and still he will not assert they are strictly true, but they are enough to be satisfactory to himself.

But at this stage of the inquiry, the question naturally arises in every thinking mind or a mind intent on knowing, if possible, the reason why things are as they seem to be, or are said to be by those who assume to instruct mankind in reference to mysterious subjects. What influence was exerted by this God of the theists, after an eternity of idle waiting, in which absolutely nothing was done, to suddenly start into activity for six literal days, and create out of previous nothing a universe. for we are not at liberty to limit this inspired account recorded in the

Bible, merely to the solar system, to which the earth belongs, it must include all the visible and invisible universe, for here is certainly, if true, a magnificent, imposing effect, for this first cause to produce. The theists' God which is the Bible God, the Jewish, Christians', and the Mahometans' God, or as they say, "first cause," certainly, accordingly to their own reasoning, did not cause it, for what he or it could not do, or cause to be done, during the vast eternity preceding this imaginary creation, he or it would or could never do, for this first cause is described by his inventors as both omniscient and unchangeable, omnipresent and eternal, consequently what this God could not or would not do during the eternity preceding the "beginning" he of course would never do.

What then, in the name of reason, caused the universe, or what caused the first cause or God to create it after an eternity of non-existence, for it must be admitted by these reasoners, there is no effect without a cause, but during an eternity, all existing causes had refused or declined or been unable to act or to produce the universe. What then, I demand to know, and I require you to explain intelligently, so I can comprehend it, was the cause which compelled the first cause, or God, suddenly to have an impulse to create it about six thousand years ago, but not six thousand quadrillion years ago, or a period so remote in the past that man's intellect is not able to compute the time. If there existed in these previous ages no causes or conditions outside or independent of the theists' God, then of course this God having in his superlative wisdom deemed it best not to create during all this previous eternity, and being unchangeable, the creative act would never have been consummated, but if there were other causes in existence, which did operate so as to prompt or cause this God to do that which, without such agencies he would not have done, then by this concession, the theists' God is instantly and entirely stripped or deprived of his divine character and attributes, ceases consequently to be the true creator and designer or architect, because in that case, other causes are revealed as existing, exterior, anterior, or superior to him, and which really preceded the theists first cause.

And thus we perceive that all arguments predicating or inventing a first cause, a God, a creation, or "beginning," do not only not explain, but they infinitely mystify existing problems, and consequently the only rational conception of nature is the eternal existence of all matter, which in and of or by itself is force, or if you please to so name it, is life, and which, possessing within itself, all the necessary attributes, not only of self-existence, but self-propagation, or if you prefer the term self-formation, needs no creator, designer or first cause, or of a God to aid



it in its evolution to the highest conceivable forms. The undeniable fact that natural law exists now and has existed as far back in the past, as human history or even mythology can penetrate, absolutely proves that in its elementary forms, it has always existed, and will always exist, and this is not all, assuming harmony and order now, and evolving world's, sun's, systems, and every variety of vegetable and animal life, distinctly and conclusively proves that it has ever evolved such forms, and that consequently in the dim vista of a past eternity, there never was a first world, first sun, first tree or first man, but all such phenomena, with which men in all ages have been familiar, are but repetitions of the same or like phenomenon, having been evolved forever, and will continue to be evolved to all eternity, in precisely the same way. Because it is plain that any particular first world, sun, or system would again imply an eternity of time preceding its formation, when it created nothing which, if true, would absolutely have prevented such world at any time, for it must be eternal stand still, or eternal activity, both cannot be true.

Being active to-day, proves the universe has been active in the past, and will be active forever in the future. I therefore ask which then is the more reasonable, that a first cause, of which we know absolutely nothing, can exist uncaused, and then from nothing create an infinite universe, or that a universe which we all behold in sublime splendor, self-evident, and real, continually struggling to evolve into sun, world, flower or man, is both self-existent, and eternal, so that the axiomatic predication of science, that time is eternal alone, proves beyond cavil or equivocation, that there is no God, no "beginning," no designer, and no "first cause," and the absence of these supernatural and prenatural agencies, of course, establishes the fact that the universe is eternal in its abstract existence and possesses in its aggregated form all the potencies to cause, create and evolve all the phenomena in existence, now, in the past, or which may exist in the future.

The only God I care to know anything about, is embraced in this definition, "God is the order of the moral universe, as also of the physical universe. The eternal law of right, which is the foundation of every human being, instinctively, naturally and universally." Is this Atheism? No, it is not, for there is no such a thing as atheism, only a different conception of what God is far more consistent and true than any Bible God.

One of the most deplorable results of false instruction in the department which the priesthood occupies, is found in the impression they seek to make, and in most cases they do make, as to the value a Christian's hope has to soften the pillow on which the dying head of a believer, in the salvation which Christ has promised those who are

faithful unto death, in which they take especial pains to represent the hard nature of the pillow, on which the head of the dying infidel is obliged to rest, so that infidel death beds have always been a fertile theme of pulpit eloquence. The priests of Christianity almost always when they officiate at the funeral of one of even the weakest and most obscure of one of their dupes, after eulogizing the triumphant faith that sustained his dying moments, will, by way of contrast, draw an imaginary, and in most cases a false picture of some noted infidel's last moments, when he lamented with the most fearful emphasis, the despair with which he viewed his future prospects, which picture is something like this. Free thought is, or seems to be so to the free thinker, very well in the days of our health and strength, when the soul is buoyed up by the pride of carnal intellect, but ah! how poor a thing it is when health and strength fail us, when we are deserted by our own self-sufficiency, we turn for support and comfort to a stronger power. In that extremity the proud free thinker turns appealingly to Jesus Christ, renounces his wicked skepticism, implores pardon of the Savior he has till now despised, and shudders at the awful scenes that await him in the next world should the hour of forgiveness be forever past.

While it may be admitted that some ministers have witnessed a scene of this kind, which they have in all cases exaggerated, it is a notorious fact, that where there is one such case in the death bed experience of those who the physician attends in their last moments, who reach that point in absolute unbelief, there are far more among dying Christians who die with unpardoned sin, or without the absolution of the priest in their dying moments. Pictorial art has been pressed into the service of this plea in behalf of religion, and in addition to this there has been a swarm of pious inventions which are called tracts, and these have been circulated among the dupes of the priesthood in vast numbers, in which the expiring skeptics have been portrayed in agonies of terror, gnashing their teeth, wringing their hands, rolling their eyes and exhibiting every sign of despair. The real answer to these arguments, if they are worthy to be called such, is found in the well-known fact, that throughout the world the religious beliefs of mankind have always been determined by the geographical accident of their birth.

In England, for instance, men grow up Protestants. in Italy and France, they grow up Catholics; in Russia, Greeks; in Turkey, Arabia, and Egypt, Mahometans; in India, Brahmins; in China, Buddhists or Confucians, and for the most part, what these have been taught in childhood and youth, they continue to believe in their manhood, and they nearly all die in the faith in which they were born and reared. Here and there, the world over, there are but a few men in comparison

to the whole mass who think for themselves in religious matters, and even if they, individually discard or renounce the faith in which they have been trained and educated, they are never free from its influence, and are restrained by their environments from becoming conspicuous and outspoken, and consequently without much influence, and a thousand ties are constantly drawing them back to the fold, or outward associations from which they have strayed, and only the few stronger ones resist these attractions; the weaker ones yield to it, and these are the ones that are taken for the illustration above referred to, in describing death bed scenes; between these extremes is the average man, whose tendencies depend on his environments or surrounding influences. If he is entirely isolated, and cut off from former associates, or even in some cases if he finds but few sympathizers, he may return to the ranks of his former faith, outwardly, and if he does that, he is at best only a hypocrite, but if he succeeds in finding many of his way of thinking, he will naturally have and display more courage and fortitude, for men, if free thinkers or mental slaves, no matter which, they are gregarious, they must have congenial associates, and in order to secure such, they must outwardly at least agree with the majority.

When skeptics are few and their relatives are orthodox, what is, or could be more natural than what is called a death bed recantation, in which the force of early training then asserts itself, when their minds in sympathy with their body is enfeebled by disease, and when on the near approach of death they are surrounded by their relatives, and perhaps the priest, who continually urge them to be reconciled to the popular faith, is it wonderful, or does it give cause for exultation, that in these circumstances they sometimes yield to these influences and solicitations, but not always. Is it wonderful when all grows dim and the foul carrion buzzard of the death chamber, the priest mutters his priestly nonsense in his hearing, that his weak brain should become dazed, and the feeble tongue utter a faint response? Should the dying man be old, there is still less reason for surprise for the recantation of old men, if it ever occurs, is easily accounted for, and explained, as they having been brought up in any particular form of religion, their earliest and tenderest memories are associated with it so when they lie down to die, they often recur to that period mechanically, just as they may, and often do forget whole years of mature life. Cases of recantation were never common, and at the present time they are exceedingly rare, indeed, they are so rare, they are never heard of except in anonymous tracts, which are always invented, it is reasonable to conclude, both for the edification of man, and the glory of God, for in these times skeptics are much more numerous and bold; they can be numbered by the thous-

ands, and they can always secure at their dying bed sides, the presence of friends who share their unbelief, and they can, and do, in most cases absolutely forbid their surviving relatives from either summoning any priest, or allowing one to say anything over their remains.

Now, suppose we should indulge in a tremendous stretch of fancy for the sake of argument, which it is, to suppose that every free thinker or skeptic should pretend to turn Christian, or wish to on his death bed, or just before his death was expected. What would it prove? Nothing, but as has been before stated, but the force of our surroundings and early training, for it is a common saying among the Jews, when they hear of one of their number turning Christian, which is extremely rare. Wait till he comes to die, and it is an astonishing fact that no Jew who turned Christian ever died in that faith, they invariably die in the Jewish faith, and the same is true of all the natives who are converted to Christianity, or pretend to be by the missionaries, who are never weary of boasting and misrepresenting both the numbers, and the social standing of their heathen converts, when the truth is, none are ever converted, and only listen to the missionary in hope of a plentiful supply of his wants, and his apparent interest in their instruction is for no other reason, and for a Christian to attempt to either take advantage of the feeble intellect of childhood, or of the weakened intellect of a dying skeptic to influence him in a religious sense, is no better, morally, than it would be to get a man drunk and then rob him, or get a woman drunk, and then rob her of her virtue, and chastity. The same is true of all missionary efforts, it is a moral outrage, to go uninvited and unwished for among any people, and then interfere with their established religion. It is quite intelligible why Christians think skeptics recant in presence of death, for these Christians believe in a vengeful God, and an everlasting hell of torment, therefore, as they themselves would tremble on the verge of eternity without a saving faith in Christ, they also imagine the skeptic does who rejects both the hope of heaven, and the fear of hell, and then the orthodox will ask is there, after all, a sincere disbeliever? and the skeptic will reply, is there a sincere Christian? and this skeptic regards the end of life as just as little to be noticed as its beginning, and to desire eternal bliss, is no proof or even indication we shall ever have it, and it is the height of absurdity to believe in what we ardently wish for.

All forms of Christianity are founded in selfishness, for the expectation held out of bliss throughout eternity in return for the profession of faith in Christ and him crucified and risen, stimulate the Christian to erect expensive houses in which to worship God in all Christian lands. Remove or annul this extravagant, unauthorized and silly



promise, and Christianity would forever totally disappear, and this promise is a priestly invention which cannot be found in the Bible, so much as an inference, a mere vile worthless deception of priestcraft for an unworthy purpose.

There is no doubt that whoever shall have read what has been written in the foregoing pages will have perceived that no one subject has been exclusively dwelt upon, except that the whole drift of these written reflections has had for its principal theme and object, to excite contempt and ridicule upon not only the Christian system or form of religious belief and practice, but also all other forms or systems classing all as alike, false and pernicious. The same will be true with what is to follow, but as Christianity is that form with which the readers of these reflections are the most familiar, more pains will be taken to criticize that form than any other, and such fragmentary reflections as may occur to the writer at various intervals when his circumstances and surroundings are such as make it possible to write at all, hence what has preceded, and what is to follow, necessarily, will be somewhat disconnected, and may in instances be repeated by reason of not rewriting and revising the manuscript.

Any candid person who has lived long enough to have had much experience, can not have failed to notice that as soon after the introduction of the imposition of the Christian religion, and its apparently secure establishment by the absorption and consolidation of the civil authority, to, in a great measure protect it when assailed from any quarter, that as soon as any man or even any considerable number of men began to question, doubt, or investigate subjects connected with religious beliefs as the ecclesiastical authorities had prescribed as salutary and beneficial or true, the church began to oppose. When the scientist who had been endowed by nature with a desire and ability to in some degree try to investigate and understand that department of science called astronomy, or study of the contents of space, which men call the starry heavens, the church immediately branded his grand, noble forehead with the word "Infidel," and compelled him, also to refrain from giving any star a Christian name, not only, but they obliged many of the first and best astronomers to desist and retract what their discoveries obliged them both to assert and be able to demonstrate, such as that the earth was a sphere instead of a plain, that it turned upon its axis, instead of remaining stationary as the ignorant writer of the Hebrew scriptures imagined it to be, and so wrote it down to be, and claimed divine authority to so write.

In later times the geologist has penetrated into the interior of the earth, and in that way has read its history in the leaves of the stone

books, which are hidden in her bosom, the records and souvenirs of all the ages. Notwithstanding that these scientists in all previous time have been by the church bigots branded as "Infidels" they have always fought for the rights of all men, to not only do their own thinking, but to give expression to such thoughts in their own way, and conceded this right to all others, being thus the only fearless advocates of liberty, and justice, and while doing all this, the church has lyingly charged us with only tearing down without building any structure to replace what we destroy, as though it was of no value to destroy the unfounded fear of hell which they hold forth to restrain men's conduct, without at the same time proving and establishing the certainty of an unfounded hope of heaven, as a reward of a virtuous life. In other words, when one destroys weeds and thistles, he is not therefore obliged to sow good seed.

During the frightful period of about one thousand years, which are known in history, as the dark ages, when Christianity had so far gained the ascendancy over paganism as to be able to be dictatorial as well as persecuting, "Faith" reigned, with but here and there a rebellious subject. The Christian temples were so crowded with the faithful devotees of the priesthood, that the floors thereof were so covered by the bended knees of the worshippers at these sacred shrines, that no space could be found for more; and the wealth and resources of nations was required, with which to erect and adorn these countless, useless magnificent cathedrals, which yet excite both the admiration and wonder of the traveler in these vast regions, and in addition to all this, the great painters, sculptors, and every grade of artist, prostituted their genius to immortalize her nonsensical vagaries, while great poets and musicians enshrined them both in song and melody, and at her bidding, obedient men covered and deluged these lands, over which the church reigned supreme, with human blood. All the scales of justice were so corrupt that gold alone could turn them, and the inventive genius of her priests, monks and subjects, invented the most horrible instruments of torture the world has ever seen, and the most horrible dungeons to confine the one who dared to differ or to doubt or hesitate, and then as an offset, peopled the clouds with angels of their own invention, and the earth with slaves. This determined deadly conflict has for thousands of years been waged between a few brave men and women on the one side, and the great ignorant mass on the other side, an undecided war between Science and Faith. The few have always appealed to reason, to honor, to law, as revealed by scientific discovery and demonstration to the known, and to happiness, and content right here, and now, in this world without, by faith waiting for another. The many have and yet do

appeal to fear, to prejudice, to miracle, to slavery, to the unknown, and to misery hereafter. The few have said, think. The many have said, believe, and let the priest do your thinking. Education and knowledge has always been both dreaded and discouraged when sought for by the masses, and centred and monopolized by the few, and the church in all its branches and ramifications, so faithfully guards the dangerous tree of knowledge, and has exerted in all ages her utmost power to prevent mankind from eating the fruit thereof, so that the priests have never ceased repeating the old threat given to the first human pair: "Ye shall not eat of it, or even touch it lest ye die." But a few Infidels in this nineteenth century, said to the ignorant rabble, or those who had been partly transformed by a taste of the tree of knowledge: Halt and drink more from this fountain, and you can then see that the Christian priest told you a lie when he instructed you that this earth was the center and sum of everything, and that the stars were made out of what little nothing God had left when he got this earth done. The priest said, his earth must rest on something, and when the scientist put his hand under it and said it rested on nothing, but was self-supported in infinite space. The church then began to say, I did not say it was flat or not so awful flat. It was kind of rounding.

Christian nations have been in the past, and now are, the most war like and insolent nations this world has ever seen. They have invented the most destructive weapons of warfare, such as the revolver, the rifle, the cannon, and bombshell, and torpedo, and they cultivate above all others, the acts of warfare, and they have no respect for the rights of any barbarous people, whose country they happen to covet, or any tribe that happens to differ with them, or an island in mid-ocean their avarice or cupidity stimulates them to desire, their ships of war sail up to it and their mariners seize it, regardless of any body's rights or protests, so that the same old spirit that animated the old inquisition, still slumbers in the breasts of Christian men.

From every pulpit come the same cry, born of the same fear, lest they eat and become as gods knowing good from evil. For this reason religion hates science. Faith detests reason. Theology is the sworn enemy of philosophy, and the church with its flaming sword still guards vigilantly the hated tree of knowledge, and like God, its author and founder curses and consigns to the lowest depths of perdition the brave few who dare to think, or in other words eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and thereby become as gods knowing truth from error, or falsehood. The only true Bible is nature, and that appeals to man as demonstration. It has nothing to conceal, nothing to represent in the manner of figure, or parable, or miracle. It has no objection to being

read and no fear of being either misunderstood, or to be contradicted. It does not pretend to be holy or sacred it simply claims and proves its claim to be true, and challenges the scrutiny of both scientists and theologians, and invites every reader to verify it for himself, and has no prohibition or fear of being blasphemed. This book of nature appeals to all the surrounding environments by which mankind in every age, in every country and throughout all time finds himself to be restrained and compelled to adapt himself to its inexorable laws and unchangeable conditions, and everything that exists, confirms and establishes its absolute perfection, and its undeviating character and immutable truth, and the earth, with its heart of fire, with its forests, its mountains, and plains, its rocks and seas, confirms its every word, and the stars which forever shine in the fathomless abyss of space, are the eternal witnesses of its infinite reality.

We, in these days hear a great deal being said about the inspiration of our holy Bible, a vigorous controversy is being had by its advocates on the one hand insisting and endeavoring to substantiate that its several authors or writers were the mere secretaries or clerks to write down such facts as the eternal God considered necessary or proper for man to have as a guide for his moral conduct to enable him to pass through this world in the best and most satisfactory manner, and at the same time prepare himself for everlasting felicity in a world to come, and those on the other hand, insisting that inspiration simply means an impression made on the mind of each human being in proportion to his capacity to be impressed by any outward object, as for instance, when I go to the seashore in a violent gale of wind, and witness the terrible agitation of the water lashing the rocky shore with majestic fury, it makes on my mind a peculiar impression in some respects different from the impression it makes upon my associates, but it leaves some impression upon all who witness it because one individual has a different development of brain from another, consequently has a different capacity of receiving and retaining impressions from the same object than his associates have, and a further reason is found in the fact that no two human beings have had the same experience in every respect, for some are old, others are young, some are males, and others are females, some are married, others are unmarried, some have had great opportunities of culture, and have improved them to the utmost, thereby cultivating and enlarging their mental faculties, rendering them able to understand and appreciate what is entirely above and beyond the capacity of another, who has never had or never improved his opportunities of acquiring useful knowledge, hence the more I have read and reflected, the greater brain capacity I have, consequently the more any grand



work of nature I see the more profound is my impression. This is my understanding of inspiration. If you understand it in another way I have no right to quarrel with you, nor have you a right to look upon me as a monster, because I differ from you.

When you ask me to believe that God inspired David to write the 109th Psalm, I won't believe that any God was malicious enough or wicked enough to inspire any such language, and so when I read in the Bible, and find by comparison and study that God so loved his children that he destroyed the first crop of them, and damned nearly the whole of the second crop, I don't believe any such nonsense, and if I don't believe any part and every part, I must say so honestly and plainly, and if you do believe it all I only ought to pity you. The most strenuous believers in the Bible are loud in their denunciations of what they are pleased to call by the name of immoral literature of the world, yet few are the books of the size of the Bible, that contain pro rata more filth than the Bible. Just read the book of Ruth, which is as filthy in its immoral suggestions as it could be made, and what more obscene writing can be found than the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis, and the first chapter of the gospel of Luke, is no better, and if this can be inspiration, the less there is of it the more moral will the world be, and few indeed are the books that contain more filth than this so-called inspired word of God, in proportion to its size, and hold, indeed, would be the priest, and destitute of modesty, who would dare to read in front of a promiscuous audience many of its indecent passages, and it would be an unpardonable insult to preach from many of its texts, or put them in any Sunday-school lesson, and still these same doctors of divinity, who studiously shun any allusion to these vile passages, are the most loud in their denunciation of any person who dare question the divine inspiration of the writer of this filth. This is not saying that on the whole it is not a good book, for it has many gems of truth, scattered among much that is vile and worthless, but it is neither new or peculiar to the Bible for the Egyptian nation, combined with the Phœnicians, were the progenitors and instructors of the Hebrews, and it is from that source, and not from any god they derived such moral precepts, as these were the means of transmitting to the Christian world through this written records, and any modest writer would no more think of soiling their pages with hundreds of quotations from this inspired word of God, than he would of inventing the most vile filth his imagination could conceive of, and the time will soon come, and in fact, has already come, when a large portion of mankind will wonder that such a book was ever called inspired, or indeed, any revelation at all.

But as long as the Bible continues through the instructions of the

priests, and at their command through parental and Sunday-school instruction, to be considered the inspired word of God, it will be impossible to make all mankind, or at least all Christians too good and pure to follow the pernicious example of many of its heroes, and the vile precepts of many of its instructions, and the literature of any Christian land will never be sweet and clean until the Bible ceases to be the production of a wise and holy God, and it continues to be a lamentable fact that the best minds of the orthodox world, are at this day endeavoring, with apparent earnestness and sincerity to prove the existence of a personal God and a personal devil, for one of these beings is just as essential as the other to the theologian, but the fact remains that within the last hundred years science, in spite of the vigorous and persistent opposition of the church, which has sneered and fought it at every step, has advanced far enough to prove the old testament false in its cosmogony, in its astronomy, in its chronology, in its history, and almost in everything, particularly in its prophecies, and hence, now, you are not expected to swallow the Bible whole, whole, Jonah, and the fiery furnace, but only required to pay your pew rent promptly, and liberally, and believe in a personal God and devil.

Anyone can see, who is not blinded by prejudice or bigotry, that for a man to be inspired, and a book to be inspired, are two very different things, for whoever wrote the immortal plays, attributed to Shakespeare, was in that direction inspired, and whoever writes a book of fiction fit to live as long as time shall continue, is in that sense inspired, or able to transmit real dramatic passion to posterity, but in no case can the reader understand or appreciate the talent required to conceive the dramatic situation described, hence his inspiration is nothing better than second-hand, or no inspiration at all, and in this way the Bible, like every other book is incapable of the same construction by reason of different developments of the intellectual faculties of all its readers, so that the man who reads is inspired, or in other words, drinks in the thoughts of the writer as far as he is able to comprehend or understand the writer, and therefore in view of all the doubts and difficulties involved in this question of inspiration, is it not more reasonable, and in every way better to say and admit without hesitation or reservation, that the Bible is simply and only the work of feeble man. That it is full of mingled truth and error, with mistakes and facts, with allegory and fable, and only reflects such usages and conditions as were peculiar to the times and country in which, whoever wrote it, lived, and if it is full of mistakes or error, say honestly they were made by man. If there is any statement contrary to what we know of nature, say the man simply was ignorant, but honest, and thus relieve God from the charge of wilful deception.

If there is anything immoral, cruel, heartless or infamous, it certainly was never ordered to be written by any being worthy of the adoration or the worship of mankind, for a real divine God could most certainly write a book far superior to this in many things. The man who now in this age of light, knowledge and liberty, regards the old testament as in any sense a sacred or an inspired book, must be considered by the most charitably inclined person, nothing short of an intellectual and a moral deformity, for there is so much in it that is cruel, ignorant and ferocious, that it is to every right-minded, candid person, simply amazing that any one above a brute ever thought it to have been the production of a merciful deity, or ever thought a man would be eternally damned any more surely by denying this Bible, than he would be if he denied the revolution of the earth on its axis, or its orbit around the sun, and the conclusion is both true and natural to suppose all men will be damned who deny or question the facts revealed by geology or botany, as they will be who deny the Christian scheme of salvation through a crucified redeemer. Does anybody suppose that when the Bible was first brought to the notice of the Christian world it was believed, or even claimed, an inspired author, for if science had been as far advanced then as it now is, the Bible never would or could have been written for now no miracle is possible, whereas, then they were both possible, and of frequent occurrence. Every sect into which the church is divided is a certificate that God has not plainly revealed even in his inspired word his will concerning man, for to each reader the Bible conveys a different meaning so that it has in the past been the prime direct cause of wars, persecutions, and countless martyrdoms, which all must have been seen and known by an infinite God, and therefore not foreseeing and preventing all this misery he is directly responsible for all these deplorable consequences, and without excuse.

According to the theologians, God the father of us all, wrote a letter to his children. We, the children, differ as to its meaning, and in consequence of these honest differences, we, these brothers strive to cut out each others hearts and in every land where this letter has been read the children to whom, and for whom it was written, have in consequence been so filled with hatred and malice that they have imprisoned and murdered each other, and also the wives and children of each other. In the name of this father who wrote us this letter, every possible enormous crime has been committed, and every conceivable outrage has been perpetrated, and thousands of as brave and worthy men as ever lived, and hundreds of thousands of tender, loving women, beautiful girls, and even prattling babes, have been, by the holy church exterminated in the name and for the sake of Christ, and in addition to that

enormity, it has exterminated honesty, and rewarded and encouraged as well as universally practiced hypocrisy, and all these because it was commanded by a book whose author was God, and men have been taught to believe it, and are now so taught before they can read one word that is in it, and that to doubt or examine it even was so enormous a crime that it would never be forgiven, either in this world or the next.

The old testament was first written in the Hebrew language, and the Hebrew language at that time had no vowels in writing it, so that it had to be written wholly with consonants, without having any divisions into either words or verses, or chapters, and there was no system of punctuation whatever, so that one can readily see by writing a sentence in that way, in the English language, that it would require inspiration, so it can be read. The doctrine of the atonement, which the priests and theologians extract from the inspired word of God, or in other words that future happiness depends upon simple belief in the merits of Christ crucified, is not only monstrous, but it is the infamy of infamies. The absurd and untruthful notion that faith in Christ is to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss, and that a dependence upon reason, observation and experience, merits eternal damnation, is too great an absurdity to be worth trying to refute, and can only be explained by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance, called faith. Whole libraries, however extensive, are too small to contain a list of the names of the wretched tortures of their brothers, by every known instrument of torture and who have filled every Christian land with violence and infamy, in defence of that creed or dogma so extracted from that sacred inspired holy book, and yet we are assured by these priests, they all died the death of the righteous and were buried in the consecrated ground, and no fear, or remorse, filled their guilty souls, in the last moment of their lives, because these men never doubted they accepted that monstrous creed, they were not infidels, they were baptized and received the eucharist, and respected the priest, and paid liberally the cost required to build and maintain the church, so that these pillows were under their dying heads, and they all died in peace and quiet.

In the sixteenth century every science and scientist was regarded as an outcast and enemy of society, for the reason that the church influenced the world, which was then under its power, to believe anything they told the ignorant mob who were always ready to hang, strangle, burn or crucify, at their bidding, and this was the fruit that the seed of Christianity produced after a few centuries of cultivation and trial. The ecclesiastics of our days refer back to their dead saints, priests and popes, and say to us skeptics, do you know more than all



these? and we without the slightest hesitation or boasting say, that if there was no other great name on our list, the one name of Humboldt, would vastly outweigh them all, and there is a host of such men, who stand in the front rank, men who do not guess at, but who know many of the secrets of nature, and these men are to-day among the advanced infidels and atheists, and have lived long enough to witness the brand of inferiority on every orthodox brain, and if we admit that some infinite being has guided and controlled the destiny of peoples or nations and individuals, history becomes a cruel and bloody farce. Age after age the strong have trampled upon the weak. The crafty and unscrupulous have ensnared and enslaved the simple and confiding, and nowhere in a single instance, has any God in any way or degree succored the oppressed, therefore man should cease to instruct his confiding and ignorant fellow man to expect any aid from on high, and by this time universal man should be taught both by precept and example that their imaginary God has no ear with which to hear, and no disposition or hand to help, so that the conclusion is reached that religion of whatever kind so far from being the end or object of this life is nothing but a hydra-headed monster, or monster with many heads, it reaches its terrible coils from the heavens and thrusts its thousand fangs into the bleeding and quivering hearts of all men who come under its baneful influence, and is the most deadly foe of human happiness and comfort.

I wonder if any man, who shall read these lines, ever tried to conceive the horrible scenes connected with the orthodox idea of the judgment day, and the damnation, eternally of those whose sentence is: "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Condensed into a small compass it amounts to just this: When you come to die, (of course it is taken for granted you die in bed, by the slow process of a lingering sickness), as you look back upon the remembrance of your past life, and see how many men you have been the cause of their ruin, or how many women you have deceived, and then deserted, you are told by your priest that all such sins may be forgiven you, but if you recollect that you have ever disparaged either God or his holy book or Christ and his church, or priests, you will see through the shadows of death the leering looks of fiends, and the cloven feet and forked tails of the devils and when you arrive at the bar of God, and the day of judgment has arrived, you will be called up by name, in presence of all the human race, by the recording secretary, or clerk, of the court, and he will examine you in something like this manner: Where are you from? I am from a Christian country on earth. What kind of a man were you? I don't like to talk or brag about myself. But you have to tell the truth here; I ask you again what kind of

a man were you? Well, I was a good man. I loved my wife and children. My home was my heaven, and my own fireside was my paradise. I never knowingly gave one of my family a moment of pain. I don't owe any man a dollar, and I left enough of the fruits of my industry to pay my funeral expenses, and to keep the wolf of want from my family. That is the kind of a man I am. Did you belong to any church? I did not, they were all too mean and narrow for me to wish to join any of them, for they were always expecting to be happy, simply because somebody else was going to be damned. Well, did you believe that rib story? Do you mean that Adam and Eve business? Yes. No, I did not; that was more of a mystery than I could swallow. "To hell with him." Next.

Where are you from? I am from the earth, too. Do you belong to any church? Yes, sir, and to the Young Men's Christian Association, too. What is your business? Cashier in a bank. Did you ever run off with any money that was not yours? I don't like to answer. But you must answer. Yes, I did. What kind of a bank was it? A savings bank. How much did you run off with? One hundred thousand dollars. Did you take anything else? Yes, sir. What? I took my neighbor's wife. Did you have a wife and children of your own? Yes, sir. And you deserted them? O, yes, but such was my confidence in God, I believed he would take care of them. Have you heard of them since? No, sir. Do you believe that rib story? Why, yes, I believed all of it, sir, and I was often sorry there was not harder stories than that in the Bible so that I could believe them too. Then you believed the whole Bible, did you? Yes, with all my heart. Give him a harp and a seat at the right hand.

This is a fair picture of orthodox day of judgment, and the way it is to be conducted, and I reject the whole, for by its theories it saves the heathen emperor, Constantine, who murdered both his wife and his oldest son, in the same year that he convened the council of Nice, to decide whether Jesus Christ was a man only, or the son of God, and they decided he was substantial with the father, therefore son of God, so that we are indebted to a double murder for the settlement of that important question, the divinity of Christ, and this was not settled till three hundred years after that Christ died, and had it not been for this council we should never have had a Savior till this day, and this same Constantine died like a Christian, for we hear nothing of devils leering at him in the shadows of death, and of his seeing his murdered wife and son, and no shrieks of terror issued from his white, thin lips, and the church has hurled no anathema against his memory, but on the contrary, has eulogized his life and accepted and guarded the story of his

vision of the cross in the clouds on the first day of the week, thereby being converted to Christianity, and ordering and compelling the church to observe that day as the Christian Sabbath, which was the true and only origin of the present Sabbath of the Christian world.

When I read in my Bible, as I have read many times, the statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," I cannot believe it or accept it, because it is contrary to my reason, for it appears to me that force has existed from all eternity, and force cannot exist apart from matter, or independent of matter and force in its nature is forever active, and without matter it could not act at all, and so I cannot avoid thinking, if I wish to, that matter must have existed forever to conceive of matter without force, or force without matter, or of a time when neither existed, or of a being who existed for an eternity, without either force or matter, and who out of nothing created both, to me is utterly impossible. Is it reasonable for me to suppose that by reason of my intellectual faculties being carried away by pride, or given over to hardness of heart, as the phrase is in theological language, I am to be damned forever. I never can believe such nonsense until I see more proof than has yet been brought to my notice. The believer in the Bible, or that it is divinely inspired, has too much to believe, for it declares that there once was a time when slavery was not only right and just, but a duty and an obligation, and also that polygamy was the highest form of virtue, and that the wars of extermination were waged with the sword of mercy, by the command, and with the active assistance of a merciful, compassionate God. When religious toleration was a crime, and when death by torture was a just penalty for having had or given expression to an honest thought.

Is not your Jehovah (God almighty) just as bad now as he was four thousand years ago, or just as good then as he is now, and the change in human conditions have made what was once right now wrong, so that slavery, polygamy, religious persecutions, and wars of conquest are now considered perfectly devilish, whereas once they were right, once they were commanded by God himself, speaking through a human medium, now they are prohibited, so that at present only the devil is in favor of slavery, and all these other evils which means that the devil entertains the same opinions now, that Jehovah did four thousand years ago, but that in the meantime Jehovah has remained exactly the same as he always was, perfectly changeless and incapable of any change.

It must be admitted by every candid writer that a vast number of very good, intelligent, honest people, in consequence of having been falsely instructed in childhood and adult life, not only believe these things, but hold them not only with the utmost tenacity, but with

exceeding reverence, and imagine them to be of the utmost importance to secure the welfare of man, and these people regard the Bible as the only light God has given his children, the foundation of all morality, of all law, order, and of all individual or national progress. These persons regard it honestly as the only means the human family have of ascertaining the will of God, the origin of man, and his destiny. I dare to differ with all these, and both assert and prove they may be for aught I know honest, yet they are greatly mistaken. In all ages and countries in which any record has been preserved so as to be now accessible, there have been those who have left on record the same ideas of justice, charity, liberty, love and law, as are found in the Bible, and hence it follows, that if the Bible really is the work of an infinite holy God, it should contain nothing but the grandest and sublimest truths, so as in all respects to excel the works of man, for within that book should be found the best examples of justice and the loftiest definitions of it, as well as the truest conceptions of human liberty, and the clearest outlines of duty, the tenderest, the highest and the noblest thoughts, and no other, not only the human mind, has ever conceived, but higher and nobler than any human mind will ever be capable of receiving.

Upon every page should be found luminous, abundant evidence of its divine origin, for without all this proof that it contains, and it only is the source whence all that is true and good is derived, unless it contains grander and more wonderful things than man has elsewhere written, we are not only justified in saying, but we are compelled to say that it was dictated and written by no being superior to man, and no greater than the average man of his times, for what is it to-day, but the fortress and defence of all crimes, and its code of morals as illustrated by its greatest and best heroes is abhorrent to the natural instincts of every tender and good man, and while it may be admitted, many of its precepts are pure and beneficial, many of its laws wise and just, many of its statements historically true, yet the same can be said of every human production. It may be said and it is always said by those whose duty it is to defend this book from its adversaries for the reason that it gives them a position out of which they must draw a subsistence for themselves and their families, that it is unfair, and a lack of candor to call attention to the bad things in the Bible, while the good things are not so much as mentioned. Unfair or not, you continually do the reverse of this, besides we insist that a divine being of infinite intelligence, power and goodness or holiness would never put any bad things or permit any other inspired author to put such trash in it as is found in abundance in the Bible, and it will never do to say that it is not verbally inspired in such thoughts as uphold any crimes, for if the words are



not inspired, what is? certainly not the thoughts, for a thought not expressed in words is not transmissible, and therefore if the ideas are inspired they must be expressed only by inspired words, that is the relations of the words, with respect to each other, must have been inspired.

Which of these two examples of Bible instruction (and such examples can be cited in any required amount) furnish the best evidence of being divinely inspired, and of being the revealed will of a just and holy God, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," or kill all the males among the little ones and kill all the women, but keep all the female children alive for yourselves? Suppose, again, there had been nothing upholding slavery, war and religious persecution, polygamy and incest, in the old testament, does any Christian suppose that because it did not uphold these crimes it was not inspired on account of this omission, or that if there had been nothing in the old testament but laws upholding and encouraging these crimes, that it would be considered the work of the true God? Every intelligent man knows that there has been a time in the history of every, almost every nation, when slavery, polygamy, wars and persecution were regarded as divine institutions, and when the people were so instructed by their priests and law givers, and when women were looked upon and treated as beasts of burden, and when among some people it was considered the duty of the husband that must be attended to, to murder the wife for differing with him, on the, to him, important subject of religion. Nations that entertain and practice these precepts at this day are regarded as savages, and it is thought to be impossible to now find any human society so degraded as to agree upon these subjects with the Jehovah of the ancient Jews, who were the real or supposed authors of the old testament.

To every one but the orthodox theologians, it is perfectly easy to account for the mistakes, atrocities and crimes of the past by saying, what is a profound truth that civilization is a slow and almost imperceptible growth, that the moral perceptions of all nations are obliged to be cultivated by ages of tyranny, of want of crime, and heroic suffering, that in all cases many centuries are required for man to put out the eyes of selfishness and hold firmly the balance of justice, and it is only when man is put in the sufferer's place that he becomes acquainted with his condition so as to realize that equal justice and the mutual obligations of life form the only true criterion upon which to construct a social society, capable of giving any satisfactory result, and to reach such a state, experience must be had, and inspired revelation is neither required or ever was, or will ever be realized.

The insipid dogmas of the past no longer reach the level of the scientific and instructed thought of the present, or satisfy the craving

hunger after more substantial aliment. The cultivated brain no longer kills its young and aspiring pupils, but nourishes and sustains it in its search after scientific truth to replace these worn out doctrines. So far as we know, man (or woman, which is practically the same thing) is the author of all books. If a book had been found by the first man, that man might be excused in believing that some invisible being was its author, but as many hundred generations of men lived and died before any book was found, and as we know man has in our brief lifetime produced many books, the probability is therefore so great that man also produced the Bible, that nothing short of priestly imposition ever could have made anybody but an intellectual dunce believe such a mess of trash and filth was anything better than man's work, and a poor specimen at that. Some feeble intellect in the contemptibly little brain of some inferior physical specimen of a human being tried his utmost to invent a new and monstrously absurd doctrine about two hundred years ago which his successors in theological fraud have named the doctrine of the atonement. In countless ways the orthodox Christian world has for these two hundred or so years been trying to explain that doctrine with the result that every effort to explain it leaves it more muddled than it before was, and finally they all admit that it is impossible to explain it, or even understand it but still insist it is true and must be believed. I am convinced that it is immoral as well as untruthful to teach that man can sin, that he can harden his sensibilities, and pollute his moral nature, and then by repenting and believing something that he does not comprehend he can avoid the consequences of his crimes. Has the promise and hope of forgiveness ever prevented the commission of sin? Should men be taught to bear the evils of a virtuous life in this world for the sake of joy in the next, that they can repent between the last sin and the last breath, and that by repentance every stain which sin has made can be washed away by and through the blood and suffering of another, and that the saved will not even pity the victims of their own crimes, that the goodness of another can be transferred to them, and that sins forgiven cease to affect the unhappy wretches sinned against.

The orthodox church says that all men are vile sinners, because he is in debt to God, and that his obligation to pay has been assumed by another victim, called a Savior. Can such a debt be transferred to another, and if it can, does that either pay it or relieve the debtor? In a financial transaction it would not by any means, can it be done in a moral guilt, or in violation of a natural law. You may as well expect the smart from a burn, received by thrusting your hand into the fire, to be borne by one who kept away from the fire entirely, as to expect a

violation of any moral law to be assumed and paid by one who never sinned, but who is so generous as to offer to suffer for you in turn for your simple belief that he is so generous. You must reap what you sow. No God either will or can give you wheat when you sow any other grain, and no devil can produce tares from wheat. It is no reason that this foolish doctrine is believed by some of the wisest and best, because if that was any reason, the same reason would oblige you to believe in the Koran, the Bible of the Mahometans. A Brahmin will make the same reason and so will the American Indian priest when he desires to enforce some absurdity upon the young of his tribe. It is not claimed that this doctrine of the atonement is necessarily false because it cannot be understood, but so it is not necessarily true because it is not comprehended, and I still insist that the plan of redemption as it is usually held and preached by all ministers of orthodox churches, and taught by theological professors to their students is absurd, unjust and immoral, also untrue.

For nearly two thousand years the fictitious character introduced into the fiction of the gospels, named Judas Iscariot, has been execrated by the Christian church, and branded as a traitor, and yet if the doctrine of the atonement is true upon his treachery hung the whole plan of salvation. Just for a moment suppose Judas had known of this plan; known that he was selected by Christ for that very purpose, and that Christ was confidently depending on him, and suppose he also knew that only by betraying Christ could he save either himself or others, what ought Judas to have done? Are you willing to rely upon an argument that justifies the treachery of that wretch? Can it be true, or anywhere near true, that any man who does not believe in a God, a personal God, acknowledges no standard of right and wrong in this world, and therefore can have no theory of rewards and punishments in the next? Is it possible that only those who believe in the God, who, persecuted for the sake of difference of opinion have any standard of right and wrong, were the greatest men of antiquity without this standard? In the eyes of all intelligent men of Egypt, of Greece, and Rome, were all deeds whether in themselves, they were good or evil, morally alike, or is it necessary to believe in an infinite intelligence before you can have any standard of right and wrong? Is it possible that a being cannot be just or virtuous unless he believes in some infinitely superior to himself? If this doctrine be true, how can your God be either wise, just or virtuous, or must he believe in some being superior to himself? If you refer me to conscience, I ask, in all earnestness, to have a definition of conscience. If a man were incapable of suffering, if man could not feel pain or remorse, the word conscience would never have been



invented, but some men's imagination have been instructed in early childhood, and cultivated in adult life to the point of feeling the mental agonies of another, and this man who has arrived to that point is the man of conscience, or in other words, conscience depends wholly on the surroundings and training each individual has received, and the impression that it has made on his mind. If you instead of living in a Christian land, and in the nineteenth century, had lived in Palestine, in the time of David and Solomon, and the wife of your bosom, who was or who might be dearer to you than your own life, had said to you, I like the religion of Egypt or Moab better than I do the one you adhere to, instead of pitying her, and trying to reclaim her, it would be a duty you could not avoid, to kill her, however much your sense of right, justice, and equity might revolt at such an alternative, and no conscientious scruples would be allowed to annul the command of God, and you must throw the first stone against a bosom that you know was filled with love for you, and when you saw the blood streaming from the wound you had made, you could then look up and receive the congratulations of the God whose commandments you had obeyed, and reflect on the wisdom and justice of this God.

The impostors, who were the inventors of any form of religion, have never been able to convince their ignorant and credulous dupes of the absolute truth of any of their tenets or theories, which they assert came to them, by or through the means of direct revelation, to these self-appointed individuals, as mediums, and consequently they have required of the rank and file who look to them for direction, that degree of confidence in this extraordinarily endowed and favored medium of communication, with the supernatural being, which would prohibit them from doubting any of these false and unfounded assumptions. This process reached its highest realization when the form of religion, called Christianity, prevailed so far over paganism or idolatry, in the region where this form originated, as to give them the alternative of adopting this new religion in place of their own or be exterminated. An unquestioned faith was required in any absurdity these tyrants of the mind, who invented these impositions, chose to state to them. This same process of an unquestioned reliance, on any and every ridiculous and positively wicked dogma that the human intellect, when wholly engrossed with this one idea, how to frame a consistent, religious system, has been able from time to time to invent, has always been required, and is now as sternly required of these misguided and falsely instructed dupes and adherents of the tyrannical hierarchs, who rule and guide, and pretend to instruct the various branches of the Christian church, as it ever has been, and woe to the man who is one of their



priests, or who is in any kind of business, who relies on the support of his Christian brethren, who dares to doubt or question any orthodox dogma or article of any creed to which he was compelled to give his assent, and the promise of his continued support. His social standing, as well as his business is ruined, and if his doubts ripen into absolute unbelief, he is as vigorously shunned by all religious fanatics and bigots as if he had the most loathsome contagious disease. Faith, the most unquestioning and unwavering absolute and firm alone will secure all these to most people, desirable and valuable favors, and is much easier and more pleasant than doubt, for it is only produced by examination, and the application of the reasoning faculty to a greater or less extent, and faith can be had without effort, and is therefore worthless, not only, but an actual damage. Any future event is uncertain in proportion to the distance beyond the present, and when any statement is made that goes beyond the close of time, and attempts to disclose what eternity is to reveal, must be capable of demonstration, before it is either reliable or valuable, or even desirable, and the fact that no attempt is made to more than assume without as much as analogy, as adequate proof, it must be instantly rejected.

No form of religious belief could survive if faith is eliminated. The importance of the exercise of what in the nature of all forms of religion is of the first and greatest moment, is to implicitly believe all the absurd statements of the founders and propagators of the several kinds of religions with which the human race has always been cursed, on the mere assertion of some unknown, and often, very obscure person, and such belief has received the name of Faith, in the Christian religion, instead of credulity, which is the proper designation to apply to all statements that are not capable of proof or demonstration, and the improper use of the term faith has led to the most deplorable results to the human intellect, causing the whole human race to so neglect the use of the gift of reason, that in nearly all the race the reason has become extinct, or so feeble as not to be able to act, so as to prevent the entire race from becoming the dupes of the designing hypocrites and impostors, that have gained an ascendancy over them by pretending to be able to reveal through inspiration, mysteries beyond the comprehension of average mortals. Such is and always has been the claim of the priests of all religions, as far as our information extends, but as the Christian form of deception, falsely called religion, is more accurately known to those who, by association and education, have been familiar to a greater or less extent with the new testament scriptures, and the various commentators who have, from time to time attempted to explain the obscure teachings intended to be put forth by the various writers, that

they assume wrote these fragmentary, meaningless drivel, designated as gospels, acts, epistles, and revelations, so as to perceive that the strongest, and most urgent stress is laid on the importance of faith, it is well to inquire what it is, and why so much depends on its unquestioned exercise, for without it in active exercise the Christian system, and to some extent, every other system could not live a moment, for it all depends on its unquestioned exercise, and an undisputed assent of the reason to a proposition that is impossible to establish, wholly improbable in its nature, totally impracticable and unnecessary. It has no excuse worth a moment's consideration for ever forcing itself on the attention of mankind, but inasmuch as it is among us, and seeks to absorb and to so dwarf and belittle all other pursuits, it must be met and tolerated like many other evils till the common sense of those who are its dupes can be aroused to such an extent that they will be able to perceive their abject condition, and throw off the army of impostors to whom they have listened in past ages.

The word faith has no meaning whatever, except such as is put on it to adapt it to the imposition intended to be put upon the race by the introduction of any new form of religious belief, and we need not inquire about any except the Christian religion. Mere belief is not necessarily faith, for belief is the product of some evidence, but faith in order to be strong must never expect proof, indeed proof would destroy faith, hence the reason must be inactive or dormant before faith can act, and the proposition to be acted upon must, in fact, be so much beyond the bounds of reason as to be impossible to be so accepted by it that any attempt to harmonize the conflicting statement put forth, on which faith is required to act as to paralyze reason and common sense. Faith is a comparatively recent invention or discovery. Nothing is ever heard of it before its incidental mention in the gospels where the healing of certain maladies was attributed to the one who received the healing as the result of his faith, when the truth was, he had no faith, and was never healed. With the same propriety the multitude of many thousands could say, they were fed by the faith, or on faith which is vastly more probable than that they had any food, and the same when the dead were revived, the sick healed. It was all faith or none of it was. Very little stress was put on the exercise of faith, till this spurious system began to be propagated. In the spurious book of the acts or doings of the apostles, much use was made of this new and improved implement of deception, to operate on the weak credulity of such as could be induced to listen to the harangues of these self-appointed fanatics, who first began to teach the rudiments of what has since developed into the various forms of religious belief, erroneously named Christianity.

The healing of a lame man by Peter, who commanded him to rise up and walk, which he immediately did by mere faith in one of whom, till that moment he had never heard. Why not call such manifestations miraculous, and the recipient of the cure be relieved of all share in the deception, and say nothing about his having any faith, for he had none. The people did so name it but Peter would not permit that construction to be put upon it, for it is to be of the utmost importance to require an unquestioned faith in the ability of these first impostors to so exercise the gifts with which they were, or were supposed to be endowed to make them celebrated, feared, honored and obeyed, in consequence of having without any cause suddenly murdered two of their dupes for merely an unintentional mistake about a small sum of money, which at the utmost limit of punishment, if any was deserved, would have been no more than a reproof for they had a right to reserve sufficient to enable those who were dependant on them, for support, such as children and dependent relatives, and Peter and the other consummate rascals ought to have thanked them for what they did give instead of killing them for their generosity, showing them to be vindictive and cruel, and unfit to be entrusted with any power beyond the control of the civil law, as the Roman government has both the right and the ability to have any such an outrageous exercise of delegated power, no matter where it was derived from being exercised, and punish this foul murder as it deserved, and would have been, if any such thing occurred in their dominions, and if that was not done, any mob would not have been amenable to punishment who had hung these wretches and all their rascally associates. This is related with as much confidence that it was a just punishment for lying, when the lie, if any was told was justifiable, and in this case nothing is shown in the account that they said, except by inference that the whole money was paid over and Peter stated that they, or his party, had no right to receive any of this money, but when any lot of lazy, ignorant fanatics prey upon any community, and force themselves on the public, they claim the right to be supported by such public, without either being employed or rendering any equivalent.

Now, just think of this disgraceful transaction. Here is a poor, honest, industrious, frugal, ignorant, unsuspecting dupe of these divinely inspired men, who were able to impose on the whole of any audience, they could persuade to assemble, to give up their whole property into their hands without as much as a receipt being given, or any plan by which they could recover either any particular sum, or be entitled to any support and under a false impression that it was dangerous to refuse to comply with such an unreasonable requirement, but



still doubting the propriety of depriving dependant relatives of what was their due, and as it was their right as well as duty to divide the sum, received by them, for their property sold below its actual value, and only give these rascals what they regarded as the surplus, the indignation of this Peter, who seems to assume to be the chief leader of this unholy gang, because they did not give the whole sum to him, that he gives him some fatal application of almighty power, with which he had been furnished by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, so that in the space of one second or less he had been called before the bar of God wholly unprepared for there is no intimation that he even professed to be a Christian, but was merely seeking light and instruction, and consequently by the teaching of these same impostors it was impossible for him to be saved, and this outrage did not satisfy the revengeful, holy Peter, he must needs have another victim, so he waits about three hours when the wife, no doubt mistrusting that her husband was in some difficulty, sets out to ascertain what has prevented him from coming home, and without so much as being aware that she was a widow, was transformed into a corpse in the same manner, and by the same blood-thirsty villain that her husband had just been, and none of this money was ever refunded, and the whole Christian Church in all time has refused to give the faintest word of censure on this scandalous transaction, but would repeat it if opportunity was given, and point to this example for justification, and this robbery has always been done by just such a set of ignorant impostors, and is now being done to furnish the means to propagate a false religion, and extort so much from the poor, in many instances as to leave a helpless family entirely destitute of the means of support, except as in some instances they had prudently laid by a small sum of the proceeds of either their accumulations or from the sale of their property, in some secure place, where those of their relatives, who were dependant on them for support could avail themselves of this resource, in time of need, and the rest is freely given to uphold a sinking and worthless institution called religion. This transaction, recorded in the fifth chapter of Acts, is only a sample of what was going on, and no doubt was suppressed, if it was ever recorded, but this alone is sufficient to forever stamp this whole system of fraud and deception, falsely designated Christianity, with infamy of so horrible a nature as to turn the whole world in disgust, unutterable away from such a monstrosity, if there was no other, but the new testament is full of just as bad specimens, for example, the high-handed and needless robbery of an innocent man, of a drove of hogs, containing two thousand, and worth at least twenty thousand dollars, by the inexcusable and unnecessary act of Christ himself, in a parley with the devil,



when he refused to leave his abode in a wild lunatic, unless he would allow him to go into the hogs, which he was permitted to do, and caused their entire destruction, and no restitution was ever so much as promised to the owner. It ought to require faith, and it does require more than that, even credulity to receive and adopt such a monstrously absurd and wicked system, as is unfolded in the whole Bible, in the old as well as the new testament.

See what the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews says about faith, let us analyze some of its statements. The definition of the word in the first verse is false to begin with, for it asserts, in the old version, that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, when the proper definition is, it is a shadow of a reality, which reality is merely imaginary. The latter definition describes faith as applied to any religious subject, for it is neither a substance nor an evidence, a mere guess only. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, is like the other writers of scripture, entirely unknown, but whoever it was, he had a way to state a proposition he wished to get established, so as to make it so obscure that many explanations can be given any of which can be made by sophistry to appear reasonable, according to the bias or the ingenuity of the commentator or expounder who writes his opinion, and the reason therefore. The second verse must be passed without comment for it has no meaning. In the old version it reads, "For by it the elders obtained a good report." The new version is different in phraseology, and also in signification. "For therein the elders had witness borne to them." There is absolutely no meaning in either or both of these statements, but any theologian would write a sermon that would require an hour to deliver, and say nothing when it was finished. The third verse, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things that are seen were not made of the things which do appear." Of course not, you must have enough faith to accept the theory that something, or even everything, was made out of nothing. It is sufficient to say in relation to that verse, that it is only assumption without even the attempt to prove a mere guess, and is not entitled to belief, even, but if faith can make real such an impossible assumption, no harm is done, for no importance to the happiness or comfort of any mortal depends on a knowledge of the way creation has produced apparent results, and no amount of research can discover any origin, or any end of creation, and faith can have no reference to any past event, but only a future event, and belief is weak at the best, when such incredible statements are put forth as we find in the first of the book of Genesis.

That first chapter of Genesis must have been invented after the pre-

tended giving the law or ten commandments on Mount Sinai, for the priesthood needed an excuse for taking from the industry of the people one-seventh of their time to propagate their imposition, but unless the masses who were the producers of all the wealth could be restrained from following their usual avocations, such as they were, and be brought together to receive religious instruction, the system of fraud and deception they had 'succeeded so far in fastening on the ignorant and degraded people, they had under their control, the system itself would be lost. It would be too much of an effort to critically examine in detail the whole of this eleventh chapter of Hebrews, but let those who want to understand on what an unsubstantial foundation faith rests, read this mess of foolishness, and then try to apply faith to it. Of course any person who is disposed to refuse to use the reasoning faculties he has, and submit to be guided by the set of designing and unscrupulous impostors who are always prowling around in all ages and countries, and under all forms of religion and civilization, can be made to believe and act on any improbable and impossible story, such impostors may tell, and there is no so glaring an impossibility anywhere to be found, as are recorded in the Bible. From the beginning to the end it is a fit subject for the exercise of faith throughout, for as soon as you apply the test of proof, or even of reason upon the absurd statements therein made, the grossest inconsistencies appear.

If the worlds and all material things are to be the work of an almighty omnipotent God, why not assert that it was done instantly, as quick as thought can act, rather than use a whole day of twenty-four hours for each separate orders of created, or as the impostors, who are now on the stage, are forced by the discoveries of science to extend the word days to mean indefinite periods of time. Why not create the sun and moon before light as well as wait till the fourth day or period of time to make the fountain and origin of all light, without which, light is impossible? Why not make man and woman at the same time, in the same manner and out of the same heap of mud, and let his existence precede all other matter instead of waiting till the last day, when in consequence of being so near exhausted by the mighty efforts of the five preceding days to make the most perfect and intricate of all the works of creation, and so in consequence made man in so big a hurry, and out of so poor material that it became necessary to destroy the race and begin again with no better success, for in order to fit any of them for salvation they must submit to be made over again in the mold of regeneration.

This whole fictitious story is a very weak invention of some undeveloped intellect in order to make the Sabbath seem to be a necessity,

in order to get sufficient rest when if the period in which nature, by the operation of nature's laws, establishing night, by withholding the light of the sun was used for rest, no further rest would be required, and therefore no excuse can be made for the invention of the holy Sabbath day, and the want of this rest was never felt for more than two thousand years, when the law was pretended to have been given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The day of rest was there invented, and there made obligatory for the alleged reason that the Lord rested on the seventh day, but that reason was withdrawn afterwards when this same Moses gave another still more foolish reason for its observance, which was, "because in that day ye were delivered out of the hands of the Egyptians," and this latter reason set aside the former and would require no one, not Jews to observe it, but in order to escape from the obligation to observe the seventh day, and furnish an excuse to substitute another, the day of rest has been changed by the Christians without either a command or a reason, or even necessity, so that Christians all rest on the day God worked, and work on the day he rested, a most glaring inconsistency.

The best Hebrew and other scholars are now engaged in a desperate struggle to endeavor to reconcile the Bible story of creation with the discoveries of science, and treat the whole subject of the origin of creation, as stated in Genesis, as an allegory, instead of literal and undoubted truth, hence, any further notice of the reference to those conspicuous examples of faith given in this eleventh chapter of Hebrews is unnecessary, and if anybody is benefited in the slightest degree by such an explanation of faith they are welcome to all the comfort they can get from it. The most inexcusable outrage on the right of a person to their own property is recorded in the gospel as written by Mark, the eleventh chapter at the thirteenth verse, by the exercise of faith so called when the proper designation is the most horrible outrage in principle, on a small scale, but might, if any better opportunity had been presented, be extended so as to entirely destroy the right to have anything in security. This story stripped of its unfounded claim to superstitious reverence is in this way: This gang of twelve ignorant paupers, who in these days would be called tramps, and in those days were a scourge to any community, who were obliged to submit to be preyed upon, and support these idle wanderers led by another of the same general type of character, and outward appearance, but who was recognized by the rest, as the leader and guide of this gang, and who has always been looked upon as the best specimen of humility, and teacher of correct morals the world has ever produced, in one of their many marauding excursions through this God forsaken region, pretended to be, as was

usually the case, hungry, and came upon a harmless, but to its owner, a valuable fig tree, for the purpose of stealing the figs, but on coming nearer they perceived this tree bore a variety that were not yet ready to be eaten, and this model of virtue and humility, instead of ripening these figs, by the exercise of faith in his case, as practicable as it was to kill the tree, he curses the tree so that twenty-four hours later they in passing that way called his attention that the tree was dead. That result was just what I intended it should be, my faith was the agent I employed to kill that tree, and any of you can not only kill a tree, if you have sufficient faith, but you could do more, with more faith you could roll that mountain, yonder, over into the sea, with a mere command, so that this transaction which is related, without giving the last hint that any blame could be attached to any one for destroying this valuable fig tree, the impression is left that any act of spoliation and robbery was justifiable, without reimbursing the owner of the property, if it was done by faith.

No explanation of the reason why Jesus Christ considered it necessary to have those twelve, stalwart, vigorous, ignorant blockheads to go prowling around, living on the bounty of others, who never required or expected any return for their generosity in supplying gratis the numerous wants of these thirteen able-bodied men, who were physically able to earn their living, not only, but support their dependant children, and relatives, who in every case they had abandoned to the tender care of the neighbors, among whom they lived. There is no pretence that these wandering vagabonds ever earned a penny in the whole three years they were tolerated, and they finally became so insolent and destructive, that measures had to be taken by society, to secure their extermination. This scheme was invented to secure and destroy the leader of the gang, who was able to carry out any scheme of plunder under the plea of an absolute owner of the whole universe, and all it contained, and if one asserting such claims, was allowed time to rally to his standard enough of this poor and ignorant class to become formidable, the greater would be the task to exterminate them.

One outrage after another was being perpetrated, perhaps insignificant in itself, but the principle involved being the same, a right to appropriate to their use what belonged to others, was justified, when opportunity was afforded, as is illustrated, not only by the wanton destruction of the fig tree, but also on a larger scale, when a large drove of swine were needlessly destroyed to accommodate the devil with a place to live.

Another instance of outrageous spoliation is given in the first verse of the sixth chapter of Luke. The date of this disgraceful transaction



is precisely given in the old version by inspiration, for it was more than two hundred years after it occurred, when this account was written, which is the second Sabbath after the first when these men, as they usually were hungry, were hungry enough to eat raw corn, or as we say, wheat, and rather than ask the owner of this field of grain for food, they plunged into his wheat field, which was ready for the reaper, and destroyed more wheat in the gathering some heads to shell the wheat, by rubbing it on their hands, than would have fed them for a week, and got no food at last, for no human stomach can digest enough whole, uncooked wheat to satisfy hunger, and no man has any right, morally or legally to appropriate to his own use what belongs to another, even if he is hungry, besides, this was done on the holy Sabbath. Why not cause food to be furnished from the same storehouse it was when five or six thousand were fed, on less than no food, for on that occasion a surplus was found left after the meal, greater than was on hand at its beginning. The fair presumption is that it was for want of faith, and no answer was made to those who remonstrated with them on the injustice of the act itself and of the want of consistency, a company of men, who were led by one, who had made open proclamation, that "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," was the proper guide for human conduct, and should not only violate his own precept himself, but teach its violation to others by example and do it on the Sabbath. This immaculate son of God justified his conduct by quoting what David had done two thousand years before, when he went into the temple of the Lord and stole a lot of bread, put there for the use of the priests, and robbed the priests to feed just such a lot of vagabonds that were with him, as were now fed in this unlawful manner. Many more similar examples might be cited to illustrate the worthlessness of this humbug called Faith, but only one more is of enough importance to justify the writer from giving time to write it that is its value on the death bed giving the sufferer, of the pangs of dissolution, the ability to look into the future state, and anticipate a happy termination to the various trials and troubles inseparable to all human experience. For the purpose of showing how destitute the strongest Faith must be, to impart any comfort to any dying mortal, it is necessary to come to the right understanding of what death is, for then we shall cease to look upon it with apprehension and dread, for in no case is death anything but a necessary and inevitable change in nature. Life and death are essential conditions, and mutually follow and sustain each other. Flowers, plants, animals and men, are dying each moment, and all these are furnishing the elements or materials for new forms of life. One form of life is constantly built up of other forms, so that the

constituents of small plants upon decaying enter into larger ones. Large animals and plants are composed of the elements of smaller varieties, and the bodies of the human race are made up of both the vegetable and the animal kingdom, and therefore death is essential to life, and equally forms a very important part of the laws which govern the universe. Let it then be regarded not as an enemy, but rather as a friend, and it is universally so regarded except where false instruction has inculcated a future life of the soul only; all savages look upon death as a mere rest after the toils of a wearisome day are over, nothing being to them so desirable or satisfactory as repose, nothing so sweet as is a peaceful, quiet sleep, and all of us, whether we have faith or not, are obliged at the close of a wearisome, troublesome life, to pass into such a rest such an undisturbed repose for we, none of us, and none that have ever lived, will ever be revived by the sound of any trumpet, to enter upon a new and untried life, however strong our faith or desire.

This short word, rest, is full of meaning and consolation, far more satisfactory than Faith, far more suggestive of a perfect freedom from trouble, sorrow, and ills of all kinds, than any other word in any language, for the gases and fluids of which our organizations are composed, gradually disintegrate and slowly return to the fountains, and sources of nature, from whence they originally came, and we gently fall into a peaceful, quiet sleep, which knows no waking, hence no faith can make real what is only imaginary or rather what is false, and is never present only to those who have been instructed in the Christian religion, to a greater or less extent. Let it not be said that this view is mere speculation, for it is only the teaching of unerring, natural, human experience and far more probable than any assumption gathered from false instruction, which theologians have invented, and based such inventions on a previously invented book of unknown authorship or source, which they falsely teach, but do not themselves believe is inspiration or supernatural revelation. So that religious faith is nothing but an incurable disease of the human brain, and therefore totally worthless and visionary, but nevertheless it is one of the most powerful levers which any impostor ever invented to both introduce and perpetuate any gross imposition, and wicked deception, and its exercise is never anything but a pretence, relying wholly on some physical imperfection of the human constitution, and is for the most part indulged in, when the object about which its exercise is required is so far beyond the grasp of a rightly balanced mind as to be absolutely incredible, then faith takes hold and makes the impossible both possible and real, for example: the great reason why the problem or origin of life is and has always been such a great mystery is apparent in the fact that man in his ignorance has not hitherto

been able to perceive the unseen, and inscrutable causes, which underlie all phenomena. He naturally assumes there is or must be such a cause, therefore he, by or through faith has postulated such a cause, which he, for want of another name more exact and comprehensive has adopted the short word, God, or the one supreme cause of all things. These impostors who invented this word have preached it, and made the parents of all the children, teach it so long and so thoroughly, that every one takes it for granted, that it is undoubtedly truth without a thought on the part of any one, of requiring one word of proof, or even a hint of the cause of all things being other than by the creative energy of God instead of its being the unalterable operation of natural laws, so that to even hint a doubt of the truth or what is by the exercise of faith made to seem to them to be true, the existence of a personal God brings the one who thus offends, brings, I say, the anathemas of its supporters.

This whole scheme, the invention of a personal God, is a very ingenious swindle, contrived in the outset by the medicine man of some tribe low down in the grade of intelligence, and then taken up and elaborated by the priests till it reached its climax of development in the Roman Catholic Pope, and it is absolutely, utterly and wholly improveable in any way, or shape, or manner, or to any degree but, wholly assumed by the nonsense called faith, which is stronger than belief, but less strong than knowledge, and so all the priests of all the religions of the world have never been able to demonstrate a single affirmation, they so confidently make regarding either God or a future life. On the other hand when their narratives relate to knowable things, they always have been proved false. Their theology has been riddled and ridiculed a thousand times; their Bible has been proved untrue, and their creeds are known to be but the insane vaporings of fanatical deluded men, who make their living by deluding others, as they themselves have been in turn deluded by those on whom they relied for instruction. Why then, I ask in all sincerity, should not any man who sees these things clearly be hostile, and the uncompromising enemy mentally, to that class or calling of men called priests, who continue to propagate and securely fasten this fearful imposition on the human race, in this age of light and knowledge, merely because it gives them a good fat living.

In the past as well as at the present time, religion has done incalculable damage in the world, both mentally and morally, for it has prevented man from advancing in a knowledge of his surroundings or environments, and it has prevented him from studying things which would have benefited him, and thus caused him to brood over fancies, having no foundation, in fact, and as long and as far as possible has

kept him in ignorance and mental slavery. It has always constantly opposed any freedom of thought and action claimed to have authority over man from some supernatural being called God, and used every means at his command to force him to see and do, that non-existent beings will, which is only another name for the priests will, and farther than that, religion has authorized the church, through all its history, to torture him, to enslave him, and to make of him a brute as well as a victim. This same church, influenced by religion, and in its name, has been guilty of committing the most horrible atrocities of which history has preserved any record and so deceived men as to cause them to act against their own best interests, and aided the strong to oppress the weak by proclaiming a subjection to their rulers, to be God's will and command. The church never looks forward but is always looking backward, and crying to its victims to keep back, and it thus has been the strong ally of the most infamous despots, the main stay of barbarous civilizations and the active repressor of all attempts to gain more liberty. There is no branch of science it has not opposed, and no important achievement of man it has not characterized as thwarting the will of God, and it never, in all its centuries of dishonor and crime was the first to seek the betterment of the human race. It has killed the pioneers of liberty and of science and in whatever country it has had the power, it has made that country either a cemetery or an intellectual slave pen, for in former times it killed, when and where it could not repress, but now it simply represses because it cannot kill, so that these charges being true, is there one good reason why all good men should not be hostile to such a religion. While the priest being so instructed that it is unavoidable can speak fluently, and in some degree eloquently, it is the sound of his voice, that is to him so exquisite, and he also fancies it is to his audience, as to be of more consequence than the clearness of his ideas, which though weak, are so abundant as to both deceive himself and others, and make it to appear that he is full of the fire which purifies, and the instruction which transforms. This person is a sample of a large class of selfish egotists, that when the test of ability is applied, are found entirely wanting there.

Every free thinker is not only justified, but it is also his bounden duty, to as much as in him lies, oppose this vile, enormous swindle called the Christian religion, as well as all supernatural superstitions of every kind, because they none of them have the least foundation, in fact and as Christianity is one form of supernaturalism we are obliged to oppose it because it is not true, and because it has done, and is doing an almost infinite amount of damage in the portion of the world where it has fastened its unholy influence. So far as any human being knows,



or ever will or can know, there was never any such being on this earth at any time as the fictitious character the four gospels have introduced, and named Jesus Christ, or any deity the Jews have invented, and who is held up by the Christian world as his father, and no such localities as heaven or hell, and the stories their Bible puts forth as to the creation of the universe or the plan of redemption, to repair the damage done by the fall of man from virtue and purity, are all equally false. There never was a child born of a virgin, and there will never be one such, and there never either was or will be a miracle wrought, except such as are apparent by artifice or legerdemain, and these are admitted by those that do them to be deceptions. There never was a dead man brought to life or one who went to hell and staid three days, and then rose out of hell, and went to heaven by way of the earth, and finally there never was any human being benefited by the death of any other human being, so as to alter his destination, and there never will be, so what is the use of speculation.

It is to be expected, of course, that any new or old system of belief in any kind of religion must rest its claims to notice and try to secure its acceptance, or adoption, on some alleged or asserted superiority over any of its rivals, and in proportion as such superiority can be, and is established and acquiesced in, it is in that proportion able to begin and continue a more or less prosperous career of imposition and deception, and therefore it becomes necessary to invent specious or plausible arguments to demonstrate such superiority, and from time to time as changes in conditions make it seem to be necessary, some able theologian is selected to apologize and defend such dogmas as have by his predecessors been put forth to create or seem to create a reason why such dogmas or doctrines are either claimed to be true or necessary and this practice has been conspicuously necessary to establish the Christian religion in its first inception and its propagation and in justifying its right to even exist, for by what right or even necessity did Christianity ever have or what excuse can its originators ever give to the world, sufficient to justify the outrage to domineer over the religious convictions of their fellow men, or to force itself on the attention of mankind when universal man had always been supplied with moral and religious systems to them satisfactory, and they neither required or needed any other, and it is therefore an outrage to begin another imposition to divide, distract, and make miserable all who could be persuaded to come within its influence, but ambition for notoriety, and a supposed ability to organize or invent some change so as to secure such notoriety, operated so strongly on some hitherto obscure individuals, sufficient to cause them to co-operate and finally to

begin this Christian imposition, at a time when the former imposition of Judaism had been obliged to disband, and was threatened, as a system, with absolute annihilation, and these ambitious but obscure Jews conceived the plan of uniting with the intelligent pagans among whom they had been dispersed by their conquerors, and thus they began, what after much discussion, concession and amalgamation finally developed into what has since been known as Christianity. Those who now live at this distance from the time when this form of religion had its origin cannot have any but the faintest conception of the wonderful and fierce controversies that were had to reach an agreement on any important doctrine, or such as were thought by these first inventors or impostors to be material, such as to agree upon the way to originate a founder or head that would meet the requirements they considered necessary, and this was finally agreed upon, by the invention of a hero or principal character, they named Jesus Christ, who never actually lived, but was a purely fictitious character, who the inventors tried to delineate as a perfect model, but signally failed, for the writer to whom was assigned the duty of writing this fictitious story of the gospel narratives was not equal to the task of producing moral perfection, but such as they are, they have come down to us as the four gospels, whose names are also fictitious, for there is no evidence that either Matthew, Mark, Luke or John ever lived, or wrote a word of these gospels, and the identity of the writers can never be known, and in fact, it is of no great importance, but whoever they were, there was contemporaneous with them, other equally able men who had to be conciliated and persuaded to adopt such initial doctrines or dogmas, as were introduced, as well as such as were from time to time added as the development of such a system required, or seemed to require to give stability and perpetuity to it, and this was the beginning or the origin of theology which is itself a pure invention, but not a science as its originators and their successors impudently claim it is, for on this false claim is founded the inferior system of apologetics, which has for its end and aim only the vindication of its right to exist, not only of theology, as it is applied to Christianity, but also of Christianity itself as such a right in its early introduction was energetically disputed by men in all respects as honest and able as those were who were its inventors and supporters, for these opponents argued that so long as Christianity lies hid in the consciousness, or as it were in the minds of the men of the church without assuming an external or objective form, or so long as it remains, only in the form of a force impelling men to moral actions, there is no great need of controversy or opposition, but that whenever or wherever Christianity attempts to force its way by theological quibbles and intricacies, into the circle of the exact

sciences, its entrance therein has been so far disputed, and must ever continue to be, for it has had to meet fierce and hostile criticism in its every step of progress, but the effort has not yet been abandoned.

All sciences, or nearly all change in some of their aspects, but this change in them is orderly and progressive, is not of a radical nature, but such as is made necessary by some new discovery, that when it becomes established and demonstrated, merely adds to its previous attainment, but unlike the changes in science, the changes in theological speculation only result in abandoning one untenable theory, and substituting another, having a greater probability of success, but will in like manner, on trial, have to be abandoned. The first Christian theologians were charged by their contemporaries with rank atheism, and they had to meet that charge and endeavor to disprove it, and it was without much success. There were arrayed on one side, able writers, both Jews and pagans, and the inventors of Christianity on the other side, but the Christian writers and theologians after some three hundred years of fierce debate finally seemingly triumphed over their adversaries, but not by convincing arguments, so much as by the fires of persecution, having secured the aid of the secular arm by the pretended conversion of the pagan emperor, Constantine, than whom a more disreputable villain never lived.

The early Christians were also charged with the most gross immoralities, and had to meet that well-founded charge as best they were able, but they have never been able to disprove it, and it has never been withdrawn, and is now made by its foes, and candor compels the admission that the enormous vices inseparable from all Christian nations give abundant reason to continue the charge, and a just comparison with other forms of religion will prove the charge to be well founded, for the two vices of intemperance and licentiousness will alone overbalance all vices pertaining to all other forms, and the principal reason why this charge is made and so strenuously insisted on is because the Christian theologian sets up the claim of superiority in the Christian morality over all others, when there is no warrant for either its mysteries or its superior morality, as can be amply proved, both from its history and its present position, for it only in its first inception, was founded on imposture, and has ever since been maintained and perpetuated by trickery, and at the present time theology is in a transition state, brought about by being compelled to adjust itself with science and vindicate its claim to a supernatural origin, which it can never do.

It is well known by all scholars, as well as those who have adopted the calling of theological professors, and their students who have, by receiving instruction become ministers of the gospel, as those who have

adopted other professions, that in the early centuries of the Christian era, so-called, say about from the second to the fourth, there were numerous able writers on religious subjects, who were eminent both for their piety and ability, and who are now known as apostolic fathers, whose writings to the number of fifty or more, have come down to our times. The most conspicuous of these are Clemens, Romanus, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, and Hermes. These claimed, or their successors claimed, in their behalf, that they were the associates of some of the apostles, or those who are said to be the writers of the epistles of the new testament, who were introduced as subordinate or inferior characters, to substantiate the fiction of the four gospels, as accessories to prove the first imposition, such as Peter and Paul, whose writings were received into the canon of inspired revelation, but these others were rejected by a vote of the council of Nice, and therefore did not find a place in our new testament, but previous to this decision of this council these writings had always been permitted to be read publicly, on the Sabbath, in all Christian assemblies, till the year three hundred and twenty-five, and no general reader can at the present time perceive any reason why they should have been rejected, for they seem as much permeated with reverence and sanctity as any of either of the epistles of Peter or Paul, so the only reasonable conclusion must be that some one or more personal reasons must have been urged before the council, that had the result to exclude these writings, and which will never be known.

There never was any date given by any critic or other person to any writing found in either the old or new testament, or anything better than a guess who was the author of any fragment of the Holy Bible, or the time it was written. As an illustration of the nature of the subjects that came before the council of Nice, and were debated in a fierce manner, and at great length, is that in reference to a theologian of ability and influence, named Arius, which after a long and sanguinary debate, was decided adversely to Arius, and the decision resulted in his persecution, his excommunication, and his banishment to a heathen city in Illyria and from his apostacy and writings has in these days developed the now popular sect named Unit Arians, who regard the Christ of the gospels as only a good man, but not divine. Any one who takes the trouble can find the Nicene creed in the Episcopal and Roman Catholic prayer book, and in subsistence is as follows: "As God is eternal, so is his son, Jesus Christ, for he is and was present in God, without a birth, ever begotten or an unbegotten—begotten. An eternal God, an eternal Son, for the son is from God himself."

Arius says, truthfully and rightfully, that this is only rank blasphemy, for I maintain that Christ simply was created by the will of God,



and endowed with his own father's glorious perfections, yet not so that the father did thereby deprive himself of any perfections or attributes, which are his without origination, he being the source of all things. The son, on the other hand, is originate, begotten by the father, so that therefore he is not co-eternal with the father, or co-unbegotten with him, as if there were two unbegotten principles, but God the father is before all things as single, and the principle of all, and therefore he is before Christ also, or in other and plainer words, he, the Christ, is of a substance that once was not, for there was a time when no Christ existed.

Now, I, who write these lines, am firmly of the opinion, that this is a sample of the hair splitting of the theological world, at the present time, and the whole there is of value in the present theological training of any and every orthodox minister or priest of the present day, in every branch of the Christian church, and it results in so dwarfing and contracting the intellects of the priests, and making prominent superstitious bigotry, in all the Christian ministry, as to make them not only a useless clog on any community that is cursed with their presence, and unworthy of any support or encouragement, but also a nest of vile and infernal scoundrels, in an intellectual way, and of not much short of that in a moral way. When we turn our attention to such philosophers as Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle, and such scientists as Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, and such travelers as Humboldt, Stanley and Livingstone, and estimate the benefit they have conferred on the world at large, when compared to all the popes, cardinals, bishops and priests that have ever lived, we can see why the former were a benefit to the world of humanity, and the latter only a curse and damage.

There can be no doubt among scholars of the present day that Aristotle was in many respects, if not in most or all, the most gifted mind among the ancients living some five hundred years before the Christian era, and that without any flattery or false estimate of his abilities, he was without a rival, supreme, because he alone treated of every subject which came within the range of ancient thought in both its scope, and form better than any one else did or could. He also initiated many new branches of inquiry, dependent on observation and induction, and thus not only represented in himself the culmination of Greek philosophy, both speculative and real, but was also as far as he possibly could be, the forerunner of modern science, and his works alone without any aid from either Christ or Moses, have actually saved the human race from barbarism, and rescued them from a savage state, and he has been named by the strongest and best minds, modern civilization has produced, as the master of those who know, and the head and

center of the philosophic family, and all great poets are proud to acknowledge him the equal in that department of any that ever wrote poetry, but our bigoted, fanatical, narrow-minded theologians and clergy, sneer at his name and achievements, and associate it with unutterable infamy, just as they do that of Tom Payne, who in many respects, was the equal of Aristotle, and was by such men as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, considered a fit associate with themselves, and they felt it to be both an honor and a privilege to have the benefit of his counsel in the formation of the only free and independent government the world has ever seen, and they were proud to acknowledge that it was by his genius that the Declaration of Independence was written by Jefferson, which is now regarded by the best intelligence of every patriot in the world, as the ablest state paper ever written by man, or at least by any American.

Perhaps it may be considered by those who have always been instructed to see or notice conspicuously only what is commendable in the life of any one who has lived in any community out of place or at least improper to comment on the adverse side, and point out some of the faults which are never alluded to by the speaker, or minister, who officiates at the funeral services of the departed, on account of a feeling of delicacy or want of propriety to such friends, who more or less sincerely mourn the loss of such departed friend. This course is commonly resorted to, also in the biographer who writes the life of any noted person, for only such traits as are universally thought to be praiseworthy, are made prominent, and the objectionable traits are either not mentioned, or if mentioned at all only by way of apology or excuse. There has been no limit to the amount of fulsome eulogy indulged in by those who have either written the Life of Jesus Christ, or have preached, so to speak, his funeral sermons, for the last, at least fifteen hundred years, and all this has been done without any facts, or none sufficient to warrant any such fulsome or flattering eulogies, for in fact, if we are simple and credulous enough to admit he ever lived at all, nothing whatever is actually known concerning his life and death, but a few faint and unsatisfactory glances at his career which was of such a brief, public duration, only lasting about one year, between his baptism, till his execution, and so private as to give but little opportunity for his biographers, who wrote the four gospels, to say but very little about him, either good, bad or indifferent, for they have inadvertently disclosed some bad traits of character, which has been overlooked, as well by those who have read what is in the gospel narratives, and those who have interpreted them to those who look to them for instruction, but a close scrutiny of these gospels by any person, who can be candid and

unbiased by a feeling of reverence, so as to regard the new testament writings the same as any other ancient writings of a similar nature, will perceive that both good and evil was as much present in the acts and teachings of Jesus Christ, as were found in the average of those among whom he is said to have lived, and while it is asserted that he went about doing good by his uninspired admirers, who only look at one side of his acts and teachings, they all fail to specify any particular acts not connected with miraculous cures and exploits, which are neither good or bad, because impossible of verification, and absolutely incredible, and no other of his best acts or teachings are any better than men in all ages and countries have always done and thought, therefore it seems proper to examine more closely this question with a design of ascertaining how far is this one-sided eulogy justifiable. All acts whether good or bad, must be judged of, to a considerable extent by the motives that prompted the act, and while we may, and perhaps must concede that the act in itself is good and beneficial in its results, yet the motive that precedes and prompts the act may be such as to neutralize and destroy its value to the one who put forth such an act.

When we separate from the recorded praiseworthy acts of Christ, which we are obliged to regard as miraculous, very little is left, so it is evident that it would be a monstrous act of injustice for one who was competent to perform a miracle of such magnitude as to raise the dead to life, after decomposition had begun to reduce the material of which the body was composed back to its original elements, to refuse to confer any asked for benefit, or one even seen and known to be necessary on one person, and bestow it on another, supposing the conditions to be alike in both cases, for that partiality would reveal an unworthy motive which so far would diminish its value to the credit of the being who performed the act, or cure, as to entirely destroy it, for no being who can at pleasure work a miracle can be excused for refusing to do it when it was applied for, and shown to be necessary, without any reference to the applicant. If we examine with the required care the instances in the gospel record where Christ acted in a miraculous way to cure disease, for instance, that in order to make these instances appear to be both more numerous and conspicuous, all three of the first gospels, and in some few cases all four of the gospels have recorded the same incident with perhaps, in some cases a slight variation, and the same course has been adopted in most of the parables and other forms of teaching, and the various other incidents such as the last supper, the arrest, trial and execution, are many times repeated, when once was sufficient, but this course was no doubt intentionally adopted to cause the casual or the careless reader to be impressed, not only with the value, but also the vast number of his

good and praiseworthy acts, to both his contemporaries and their successors.

There cannot be found the slightest evidence that Jesus Christ had a particle of education, or so much as to be able to either read or write, and none of his answers to any of the difficult questions to which he was often obliged to find a suitable answer, show him to be able to more than give, in many instances, no answer at all, and in others, simply an evasive answer, but in no case, a direct satisfactory answer, showing very clearly that he had natural ability, or acquired ability of only the average, or below the average of his contemporaries, and those he selected for his associates, were likewise of the same low grade of intelligence, and they from the nature of the calling they were engaged in, when they were notified that Christ desired their soul elevating society, precludes us from having the faintest suspicion, they were anything better or more refining than ignorant loafers, and it is one of the worst blemishes that can be attached to his moral character, that he not only chose such a vile, low set as his most intimate friends and associates, and it is also an unexplained mystery what use he could expect to make of such a low, ignorant set of twelve able bodied men, anyhow, for it must have been an intolerable burden and nuisance on any community to be obliged to feed, clothe, and lodge thirteen strong, healthy, able bodied men, who, so far as recorded, never did in the slightest way or degree, make or offer to make the least recompense for all this gratuitous generosity, but so far from it, they on the other hand, instead of being grateful, seemed to delight to annoy and wantonly destroy the property of those on whom they forced themselves, both uninvited and unexpected, for when they found no figs on a tree to steal, when it was out of season, and they had no reason to expect there was any, he, Christ, not only killed the tree, but afterwards justified the act by bragging how much faith he had in comparison with the weak faith these loafers had who might not only kill all the trees on yonder mountain, but also throw the mountain into the sea, if they only had plenty of faith, and treated this wanton destruction of this fig tree as though it was a mere unimportant incident, when it was for anything that we know, to the contrary, or which appears in the account which is repeated three times, one of the sources of income to some poor man who could ill afford to have the figs stolen, much less to lose the tree itself. If this is doing unto others as you would that they should do to you, when you reverse the conditions, the less you have of such morality the better you are off.

Another like instance of wilful damage is recorded when these thirteen able bodied men, who were, it would seem, always hungry, instead



of going into the owner's house, who owned a certain field of wheat, which was ready for the sickle, and asking for bread, with which to satisfy their hunger, they preferred to steal enough of his uncut wheat, and actually did so, and in doing so trampled down under their feet, and destroyed wheat enough to make more bread than would have been required to feed them, and besides they broke the legal Sabbath, and the meanest part of the whole disgraceful story is, that when he was accused of this rascally thieving, he justified it because David went into the temple more than a thousand years before, and stole a lot of bread that had been provided for the priest, thus not only stealing bread, but cheating the priests out of their dinner, and it was lucky for them that the owner of the field was at the synagogue instead of being at home, or he would have had them arrested, if he could not have driven them away, and perhaps he did, but the writer of the story forgot to mention it. This is another specimen of moral conduct, not worthy of imitation, and must not be included in the list referred to in the maxim, "He went about doing good," for this was doing evil.

Another specimen of evil conduct is on record, and lest it should not be known, far and near, it is repeated in three gospels, about the crazy man, the devil and the hogs, where it is represented that the meek and lowly Lord of heaven and earth coaxed the devil, after much parleying, to vacate his home in the crazy man's body, and reside in a drove of two thousand hogs that were close by, which frightened the hogs so, that they ran and jumped off a precipice into the sea and were all a total loss to their owner, causing a damage to him of not less than twenty thousand dollars, if you estimate each hog worth the small sum of ten dollars, which was the cause, no doubt of the man's ruin, that owned the hogs. This was doing good with a wholesale vengeance, for this poor man, or whether rich or poor, had no redress, for these men were not worth the clothes they wore, for Christ had said in his public discourse the he, the son of man, had not where to lay his head.

Another instance occurs about stealing the jackass, when Christ was about to enter Jerusalem, for the first and only time he was ever there, when he had discovered a prophecy somewhere that he construed to mean that he was to ride to Jerusalem on an ass or a colt, the foal of an ass, on which never man sat, so he sent some of these loafers, who were with him to do his bidding, to a certain place where another of these loafers had stole a jackass, and tied him to a hitching post, and told him to untie him and bring him to Christ, which he did, and Christ being suspicious that they might get into trouble, told them to say to any person who so interfered with them, as to ask them what they were going to do with the colt, to reply, "The Lord hath need of him, and

then all will be right," and whatever became of the jackass after the ride was finished inspiration has never revealed, so if that performance differs from stealing, pray tell us wherein, but this may be an explanation why Christ abolished the ten commandments, and substituted in their place two of his own make, so that the eighth of the laws of Moses, which says, "Thou shalt not steal," was not in force, and hence stealing is doing exactly to others as you would wish others to do to you, and is a fair sample of Christian morality, both in individuals and the Christian church, and nations, and if every disreputable act that this gang of thirteen loafers did was recorded, there is no longer any wonder they were so numerous, and so outrageous, that longer forbearance with them became impossible, and so they were forcibly exterminated by executing the leader of the gang, and dispersing the other twelve, and that was supposed would end the whole business.

A proper sense of modesty causes the writer to refrain to notice, with much minuteness the association of this immaculate teacher of morality with the female sex, who sharply reprov'd his own mother on several occasions, when to do so must have been to her a source of great mortification, and at the same time it showed him to be brutal, and unfeeling, to a degree that was not to his credit, but he took great notice of one Mary Magdalene, who by all accounts, must have been known in that vicinity as a disreputable woman, for the first we hear of her, was that she was relieved of seven devils, by Christ casting them out of her, but whether he got them all out so that she was pure enough for him to associate with her, without contracting moral defilement, is not disclosed, but it is certain from further accounts that she was anxious to be noticed by him, and actually thrust herself, uninvited, into the house where Christ was being fed, with his whole gang of followers, and annointed his feet with a costly fragrant ointment, and wiped off the surplus with her long hair, and when the spectators remonstrated with him (Christ), he replied that she did this to prepare him for his burial, and this act of this woman in such a place and time showed at the best an unwarrantable intimacy and familiarity that attracted the notice of the guests at the feast, so that he was afterwards charged by them with associating with her, when he knew, as they all did, that she was a sinner, which word, signified with them, more than moral depravity, and this woman was the first to see him after his death and resurrection.

But the priests of our day, unlike the priests of that day, put a very pious construction on all this and would regard any other suspicion as rank blasphemy, but it is to be remarked that appearances often justify unfavorable remarks, when but for them, it would not be regarded as

anything, more than ordinary, innocent conduct, hence a teacher of morality should never give occasion by his own conduct for any unfavorable suspicions for more harm is thus done to morality than would be the case, if no such claim was made, and when you are called upon in addition to this instance to examine another similar case, of a vile woman, who the Jews had caught in the lapse from virtue, called adultery, which was a violation of the seventh Mosaic law or commandment, which was punishable with death by stoning, and these Jews, before inflicting this extreme penalty, brought her to Christ, to see if he would approve or disapprove the penalty which was decreed by Moses to be proper for such an offence. Moses says, "such as her shall be stoned," now what do you say. I say: "Let the one of you that is without sin," meaning that particular sin of adultery, "cast the first stone." What a foolish answer that was to such a question, but the account says these men all confessed their guilt of this crime, and therefore they all deserved this penalty as much as she did, and so they all left. Now any fool can see with half an eye that if all the Jew males that were in that room had been privately guilty of that crime, and had not been detected they were as much obliged to assist in stoning this woman as if they were as spotless as an infant, but this absurd story ends with the annulling and justifying that violation of the law of Moses, in this case, and all the punishment she gets is a warning to not be caught at it again.

Such a decision to such an offence, would seem to encourage adultery, but you must be private about it so as not to be caught. The revised version of the new testament, says this whole story is nothing but a forgery by some former revisers, for no ancient manuscript contains any such story, and for the credit of morality it is to be hoped that this story should be blotted out entirely, but none of the old mossback-theologians would, for a moment listen to any proposition to omit one word of this disreputable story, which to put the most charitable construction on it, that it will possibly bear, leaves a stain on the moral character of Christ, and a teaching which ought to be avoided in a system so near divine.

Another instance is found in the account of the water and wine story, or miracle, recorded in the second chapter of the fourth gospel, which, while not directly charging Christ with a drunken debauch, and of assisting to provide the means to continue it when without any more wine being furnished, it was beyond the bounds of decency for such respectability as any temperance society can tolerate at this day, so that while it may be conceded that perhaps Christ was not drunk, himself, no such concession can be made with reference to the rest of the company, for having such an additional ample supply of good wine, did

undoubtedly result in no less than a prolonged drunken debauch with the women as well as the men, who were there, for in those days, women and men alike drank wine freely, but at all events this is a poor place to find an immaculate teacher of morality, and a bad example to find recorded in an inspired revelation, that is the foundation of a system of morality, more perfect than any or all others. More lapses from strict morality might be cited, but these are enough to neutralize the unauthorized statement that Christ went about doing good and only good.

There can be no doubt or dispute about the proposition that in a general way, a conciliatory and accommodating disposition, either to avoid contention or strife, either physical or mental, or if it is not possible to wholly avoid it instead of being obstinate and aggressive, hateful and denunciatory, offensive and arbitrary, the reverse of these traits gives better results, and is far more satisfactory than contention, outrage, abuse, and vituperation, and universal humanity always has been sensible of that fact and, needed not to be reminded of it afresh by Jesus Christ in his sermon on the Mount, in which he not only recommends actual non-resistance in physical, as well as mental contests, and it is there carried to such an unwarrantable and an impossible extreme, that he himself should be the last one to violate his own precepts.

What the cause was that operated on the meek and inoffensive disposition which Christ there taught, was to distinguish his own conduct and that of his followers in all ages, to call forth and excuse the severe denunciations he pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees, which we find in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, Mark 12-40, Luke 20-47, is not revealed, but he must have been fearfully excited with both wrath and hate to denounce them in so severe a manner with such hateful charges as are repeated in nearly the whole chapter, and finally to send them all to hell and damnation, as he did at the thirty-third verse of this chapter, clearly teaching that there is a hell and damnation, too, and that these to whom he addressed these words were pretty certain to experience both of these destinies in return for their vile conduct, not realizing that this would be inflicting an infinite punishment for a finite sin.

Now these charges were either true or false, but in neither case was it his duty, nor had he any right to reprove them, and no good purpose would be likely to result from these severe denunciations, for very likely they retaliated on him and gave him as severe a reprimand as he gave them, and no good resulted to them or to the world by this exhibition of spite and anger. We, however get but one side of this disgraceful scene, like as we do in scripture, of nearly all others, and that the side most favorable, for the favorite, whose conduct must be justified at whatever cost to truth and justice.



Again we are informed in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, Christ went into the temple and that he got so violently mad, or angry, at some persons who had no doubt got leave to do so from the proper authority, because no one can trespass upon so sacred a place as any temple is, without the required leave to occupy a certain spot, which was not required for the use of the priests, in which to pursue their several avocations, to trade in certain goods, and very likely not only had leave from the trustees, but also paid a required sum to the trustees as a rent for the use of this desirable location, and had a right to be there, but Christ comes along and without any pretence or show of right, takes a scourge of small cords, similar to our cat of nine tails, such as criminals are whipped with, when sentenced for a crime, and forcibly drove all these persons away from these localities, and sharply reproved them for daring to be where they had a right to be, but he did not even pretend to have any right to drive them away, but he, as usual, had with him these twelve men, who used very vigorous language as well as physical force, and therefore no resistance was offered. This incident is not referred to only as it reveals an exercise of an outrageous interference in what was none of his business, for he neither owned the temple, or had any official authority to enter it, for the privilege to so much as worship there, much less to interfere with those who were there by right, for all who enter any shrine in any form of religion, do so in obedience to strict regulations, so as to prevent the presence of any vile or unworthy persons, which would defile it even by their unholy presence.

Every sincere and honest Christian believer will concede, without the least hesitation, that if there is any question relating to Christianity more important than any other, or in fact than all others, it is whether or not Jesus Christ, or such an one as the gospels describe and name as such, ever lived at all in Palestine; and another next to that in importance, if the first has been clearly and satisfactorily proved, is, was he ever crucified; and if this has also been clearly and unmistakably proved, another still has to be settled, and that is, where he was crucified, and by whom? For in the four gospels the writers thereof, whoever they were, all four agree that he was crucified in or near Jerusalem, in Palestine; but the writer of the book of Revelations, who all Christians say was the same person who wrote the fourth gospel, and that he wrote Revelations after he wrote the fourth gospel, asserts at the eleventh chapter and eighth verse that he was crucified in Egypt; so that there is a contradiction by the same writer, which amounts to a mistake in inspiration, or revelation, on a fundamental question, for a right solution of which an urgent necessity exists, and must be had, or the whole imposition must be abandoned, for if he was crucified in Egypt, it was not done by the

Jews. Another important matter to be attended to is of the same importance to all other religions as to the Christian: The derivation and definition of the word religion, for both its root and the thing itself, implies the trade mark of mental slavery, by its teaching and assuming that universal man owes allegiance and obedience to God, his supposed creator.

The Latin word ligo means in that language, "to bind," and re-ligo means to rebind, or bind again more secure than before was the case, and that latin word religo has been translated religion by our Bible revisers, and is used so as to relate to one who has been by these priests converted, and thus brought under or within the second bondage, or allegiance, and again bound or rebound, and in this way is the mental bondage born, which is the new birth, or regeneration, and which is ever afterwards nourished and cultivated by the priest, so that he may become what he is under all forms of religion, the tyrant over the mental slaves whom he has created, nourished and brought to maturity.

The parties to this mental bondage are the so-called creator, who is the priest, on the one hand, and man, the recreated, on the other, or a potentate and a peon, which signifies master and slave, united by the hateful "ligo" or bond, and all this absurdity is the abominable outcome of the senseless, wicked fiction of the fall of the first created man from innocence and virtue; for before this theological discovery was made there was on the part of man only fear, superstition and blind fetichism, but no religion, and religion, instead of being a beautiful thing, or if you please to call it so, an acquisition, and in accord with his nature, it is only an unmitigated curse, and a continual damage to any man's intellectual faculties, no matter what name you give it, of soul, mind, or what not, because it holds it back and distorts it out of its proper proportions and functions, and tends strongly to both insanity and idiocy.

Ethics, uprightness, veracity and altruism of both humanity and civilization, are crowning attainments high above religion, and these are all simply the products of morality, and everybody not a mere fool must know that morality is as foreign to religion as history is from friction or gravitation, and morality alone has in the past done everything towards modifying human character and institutions that has been done, and is yet competent without any aid from religion to do in the future what is required to purify and elevate the world, so as to make it all that man can desire, because man has always and will forever evolve morality as a legitimate result of practical benevolence.

Religion has never done anything better than to disturb social condi-

tions and create meddlesome damage and continual evil, and has never in its history contributed one single item of knowledge to mankind, because it is not now, or it never was in the past, a friend of knowledge, and so far as its friendship for knowledge goes, the first divine lie recorded in the Bible was perpetrated in support of ignorance as against knowledge, and so to curse Adam for an act which was a both natural and noble desire for knowledge, and a curse pronounced for such desire, and a premium given for continued ignorance; and this is the lie: Man did not die, as God said he would, if he ate of the knowledge fruit, but lived, as Satan or desire to both get knowledge and live, as Satan truly said to him he would, and thus the taking and eating the forbidden fruit was merely an eye opener for Adam, for truth and veracity were then and there at issue with falsehood and error.

A divine falsehood failed, and the truth of the devil stood fast, and this is a religious episode in its own behalf, but there is no moral beauty in sight here, for the body and soul of morality is knowledge, while the only soul or body any form of religion has is ignorance, unless you insist that superstition also has a body and soul; and religion always is based on a fear that all things may some day or time, which it has named the judgment day, be explained; but knowledge, which is the soul of civilization, always desires and persistently seeks after an explanation of all phenomena, now, or as soon as one can be made that will permit of demonstration.

Ignorance is the soul of every form of religion, for the all nothingness is the soul of the unknowable and mysterious mystery upon mystery, or the mystery of our existence is all the soul religion has, and that explanation is its only purpose and its ultimate goal, which it will never reach or even approach any nearer than it was when it first started in its pursuit, and so far from any of its aims being either beautiful or useful, they are only hideous deformity, a stultifier, a curse, a mental dissipation.

Does not your reason say that something cannot spring from nothing? It does, and says so truly, but religion on the other hand says, all things were made out of nothing. Reason says every person must meet the result of his own acts; religion, on the contrary, says that through or by faith the crucified savior takes the load off the guilty shoulders. Reason says, three into one will go no times, and leaves no remainder; religion says, three gods will go into one god, and leave enough over to make faith enough to be able to cause you to swallow that, and every other absurdity. Reason says that a wise man prudently looks forward to to-morrow, and provides for it; religion of the best kind, as its votaries assert, by the instruction of their leader and

founder, says emphatically and plainly, in the sermon on the Mount, "take no thought for or about the morrow;" so Christ, the inventor and promulgator of that vile precept, with his twelve tramps, sets a public example both of idleness and poverty, and thus makes himself and his gang of twelve, able bodied, idle vagabonds an intolerable, unendurable burden on any region where they happened to locate, and that example has been ever since, and is now followed by all priests of all religions; and these priests always have been an intolerable burden and curse whenever and wherever they have intruded their unholy and unwelcomed presence.

There never was the least particle of honesty or sincerity in any form or mode of baptism, or in its twin ceremony, circumcision, for neither of them had its origin in the form of religion where they are now observed with the most strict regularity and obligation, baptism for the Christian, circumcision for the Jew; for both these observances were old before either of these religions were invented, and they were both copied, or more properly stolen, without leave, and without as much as giving credit to the source whence they were derived, but they have always been associated with so much mystery, and administered with so much mock solemnity, and thus been made to appear to be so indispensably important, that it seems both proper and necessary to show up by ridicule its utter uselessness and absurdity, by describing in the first place the rite of circumcision, how and why it is thought essential to have it administered, and in the second place baptism, how and why it is administered. The rite of circumcision was originated by the patriarch Abraham, who circumcised himself when he was ninety-nine years old, pretending that God made him do it, as a reminder that he had made a covenant with God to be the founder and author of a new nation, who would, through his influence and instruction, worship, fear and adore him, to the exclusion of all other Gods, and he on his part promising to make of him a great nation, when as yet he had not so much as a wife by whom to produce a beginning of a new nation. This brand on the private part of the person of Abraham was intended only for the purpose of reminding him, who was of full age, when he received it, of his covenant; but it was afterwards, in the time of Moses, reduced to a more perfect system, and extended to all males, and its only object was not as any reminder of any covenant with God, but only a mark by which every male Jew could be identified unmistakably, and was never applied to a Jew female infant, and the male infant must be mutilated by depriving him of a small portion of an unnecessary appendage to his reproductive organ, in such a precise surgical way as to make it impossible for any person but a Jewish priest to imitate, and although circumcision



had been common or at least known before Abraham's time, it had never been applied to the same organ, but was a mark or brand on the ear, that was always visible, but only was used when some particular stage of progress had been reached in the religious system to which this person, whether male or female, had attained, and the private mark put upon the Jew male infant on the eighth day after birth could only be seen when critically examined, and was never intended to be more than a mark of identification, except incidentally it might have a sanitary value. This mark was never put upon an adult male, so that a proselyte Jew, or one converted or adopted into Judaism in adult age, could never be a genuine Jew, but only a spurious imitation by profession alone, and had to be excluded from any participation in any of its more intricate mysteries, but might be the father of a genuine Jew male child, if married to a Jewess. So much for the nonsensical rite of circumcision, which is as rigidly observed at the present day as it ever was, and is only, as it was always, a senseless priestly humbug and imposition.

Now let us see how much better baptism is. The Christian has stolen this rite from the ancient Egyptian, and they in turn stole it from the Hindoo or Brahmin, long ages before either Judaism or Christianity was invented. The Christian rite of baptism is, in its institution, a pretended continuation of the Jewish rite of circumcision; but it is not such, for it leaves no mark of identification on any part of the person, and it is administered or applied by the priest indiscriminately to all, whether male or female, and it is in all cases a mere application of water in some prescribed manner to the person, with more or less of ostentation or publicity, as the variety of Christian priests who administers it requires. In the Roman Catholic church it is what it signifies, actual regeneration or new birth, and is for the most part publicly observed in the manner following: If the applicant is a new born infant, the persons who bring it wait at the door of the church for the priest, who, on being notified, comes there with his surplice and his purple robe, surrounded by his clerks and attendants. Every child whose parents apply for baptism must have a godfather, whether he has any other father or not, who has to give a solemn promise in the child's name to live and die in the true Catholic and apostolic faith, and the name is then given to the priest, who has asked for it. Then follows the exhortation to the sponsors, after which the priest, calling the child by name, asks, "What dost thou demand of the church?" The godfather answers, "Eternal life." The priest proceeds: "If thou art desirous of obtaining eternal life, keep God's commandments, "Thou shall love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart," etc.; after which the priest breathes three times in the child's face, saying, "Come out of this child, thou evil spirit, and

make room for the Holy Ghost." Then he makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and breast, saying, "Receive the sign of the cross on thy forehead and in thy heart," upon which, taking off his cap, he repeats a short prayer, and laying his hand gently on the child's head, he repeats a second prayer. Then he blesses some salt, and putting a little of it into the child's mouth, he says, "Receive the salt of wisdom."

This performance is all had at the church door, after which the priest, with the godfathers and godmothers, come into the church, and advancing towards the font, repeat the apostle's creed and the Lord's prayer. Arriving at the font, the priest again exorcises the evil spirit, and taking a little of his own spittle with the thumb of his right hand, rubs it on the child's ears and nostrils, repeating, as he touches the right ear, the same word, "Ephphatha," (be thou opened), which our Saviour made use of when he cured the man born deaf and dumb. Lastly they pull off its swaddling clothes, or strip it below the shoulders, during which the priest prepares the oil. The sponsors then hold the child directly over the font, observing to turn it due east and west, whereupon the priest asks the child whether he renounces the devil and all his works, and the godfather having answered in the affirmative, the priest anoints the child between the shoulders in the form of a cross, then taking some of the holy or consecrated water, he pours part of it thrice on the child's head, at each perfusion calling on one of the persons of the holy trinity. The priest then concludes the ceremony with an exhortation. The Roman church allows the midwife to baptize a child before the birth is completed, in case of danger, and the child thus baptized may be buried in consecrated ground. The Roman Catholic, also, in some extreme cases baptize the dead, by requiring another to be baptized for them.

The foregoing is the manner in which all Roman Catholics have been consecrated in infancy, and their parents, if alive, and if not, their sponsors, always prevent any of these infants from being tainted or defiled by any form of heresy, until old enough to be taken charge of by those from whom they are to be instructed; and when sufficiently advanced in religious knowledge, to correctly answer a certain set of questions of a religious nature, they are confirmed, and made fit to receive the eucharist, or sacrament of the Lord's supper, and only in rare cases is it possible to obliterate and destroy all this first instruction, which is being constantly added to and strengthened while life lasts, and is it any wonder that Catholics are what they are? But still in spite of all these restraining influences, and others of a still stronger kind, such as fear of persecution, of excommunication, which is more dreadful than death, the Roman church lost a large body of its most

important and best adherents, by refusing to divorce an English king who applied to the pope for a permit to marry a second wife in the lifetime of the first wife, and the Episcopal or English church has ever since maintained a separate church organization, in many respects similar to the Roman Catholic, but not in all, and this also baptizes all its infants, with sponsors, and much of the same forms as the parent church, but rejects the pope's authority, and has the crowned head of England for its supreme ruler.

The chief thing to be noticed in connection with the ceremony of baptism, in whatsoever way it is held and administered, is that all its priests instruct the people that it is by or through this ordinance the Holy Ghost is in some mysterious way communicated to the individual who receives it, when, without the outward observance of this rite, it would be withheld, no matter how pure and virtuous a life he might lead. Baptism is the door through which any soul must pass before it would be admitted into heaven, and if such were to be the result, and all those who had been baptized and had afterwards violated or failed to live up to their vows, were admitted there, more injustice would be done than if all were excluded; for it is a notorious fact that there are more Roman Catholics in the criminal classes of any country than of all others combined, and a higher grade of criminals can be found where the most rigid observances are required than any where else, for a cloak of religion is seldom looked under to find a criminal; and so the worst escape suspicion for the most part, but now and then one is discovered who stands high in church station.

In the example of Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon, who all lived and died before any Holy Ghost had ever been heard of, and all of whom were God's favorites, Christians have an inciting example of crime and debauchery powerful in its effect, for the modern Bible believer can commit no crime so revolting and cruel but he can find a parallel in the lives of one of these Bible heroes to justify him. Then he has one of the standard doctrines of orthodoxy, which is, "Jesus paid it all," and "while the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return." Such doctrines are nothing less than a wholesale license to the evil disposed, or strongly tempted, to commit crime, and are one of the principal causes that fill the penitentiaries in all Christian lands with convicts, and populate the penal colony of Canada with Christian forgers and bank wreckers.

It requires a right proportion of zeal and ignorance to make a good Christian fool, to my own certain knowledge, for from the age of twenty-two years to that of seventy-two, or fifty years, I was flattered as a pillar of the Christian church, and for this long time this flattery was

more charming than the music of a Jew's harp, but as I got cured of religious insanity I began to write this book. It now seems strange to me that my reason was so benumbed or so confined by the Bible and its creeds for the greater part of my long life; and when I reflect on my early training, and with what influences my early life was surrounded, I cease to wonder, but notwithstanding all this I now feel, when past seventy-four years of age, like a bird uncaged or turned loose from confinement, and given its freedom. What mental pleasure I enjoy! What magnificent sights I see! What depths of satisfaction I feel, now that I at last breathe the free air of nature, which is now my God, in the place of the God I so long worshipped and feared, but never loved, language is not adequate to fitly express. Sad is the reflection to me, and dark are the thoughts, that I for thirty years of mature manhood was so humbugged and duped by the priests, that I consented to join a Christian church and remain so long a member, imbibing and drinking in its false doctrines. I first erred in joining it, and further erred in continuing so long a member thereof.

Skepticism is confined to religious subjects almost wholly, in fact a want of confidence in other than theologic subjects, is only described as opposition. Skepticism pertains as much to any pagan religion as to the Christian, Jewish or Mahometan form. Buddhism is an imposition that is only adapted to impose on the ignorant masses, and in all countries and times the upper and lettered classes, who have become enlightened by intellectual culture, are all infected with a wide spread skepticism, causing a reluctance to accept any dogma that eludes the test of material analysis. All the missionary armies that enter the field are subdivided into so many different and hostile sects, that nothing but confusion results in any foreign field.

In 1891, in the city of Tokio, the capital of Japan, the directory contained a list of thirty-one different churches, by as many different Christian sects, and these have the vast number of three hundred male and female missionaries, an ambitious lot of fanatics, each for himself, representing that his is the true and only safe path to heaven, and the result is that the Japanese, when they see the keys of the kingdom of heaven in so many different hands, are so bewildered they are wholly incapable of coming to any decision, that they usually decide that there is so much uncertainty which is the true road to follow, they reject them all and decide they want no heaven at all. This scrambling to secure recruits to Christianity in every foreign land, defeats the whole scheme, while if only the ethical teachings of the Bible were offered them in a systematized body of precepts and prayers, they might, after much persuasion turn a listening if not a receptive attention, but as the



missionary scheme is at present managed, it only produces a universal, wide spread skepticism of even their own system, as well as the one that is in this way offered them. It is mere nothing any missionary enterprise can accomplish in the securing recruits, in no matter what numbers, for these are all in the very lowest grade, and until you secure the official or ruling class, you have done nothing of any importance, and these are too intelligent to be caught with such chaff as these weak-brained missionaries throw before them, or in fact they never allow themselves to come in contact with them, and as no missionary is permitted to go to any place outside of treaty ports in any civilized foreign land, their influence is of small dimensions, and is mostly confined to foreigners from their own lands, who are permitted to reside at these ports for trade, or in the capacity of officials and servants.

The enormous exaggerations in all reports of Christian missionary success in any foreign field is resorted to for the purpose of encouraging further donations of money, and stimulating the ambition of the students of theology, who have failed to be competent to fill vacant pulpits, where intelligence is in the pews, and are left on the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities, who are obliged to find them employment, and to get rid of them, send them into these wild, inhospitable regions, to sink or float, as they may be able.

The Chinese have been compelled by England and France to admit their missionaries, by inserting an article in their treaties, made at the close of an unprovoked war to humiliate the vanquished, as such victors might consider adequate compensation for the expenses of such wars. At the close of the war, when England forced the Chinese to admit opium, the missionary article, eighth, was put into that treaty, by Lord Elgin, in reference to the rights of both Catholics and Protestants to teach their form of Christianity. "Persons teaching or professing it, therefore, shall alike, be entitled to the protection of the Chinese authorities; nor shall any such, peaceably pursuing their calling, and not offending against the law be persecuted or interfered with." The French treaty is still stronger, which was made in 1860, two years later than the English treaty, after the capture and sacking of the summer palace of the Emperor, by both England and France, when in article 13 it was stipulated: "The Christian religion, having for its essential object, the leading of men to virtue, the members of all Christian communities shall enjoy entire security for their persons and property, and the free exercise of their religion," and to show the treachery and outrageous barbarity of Christian virtue as they impudently proposed to inculcate among the Chinese after this treaty was signed, a French missionary, who acted as interpreter, introduced, while it was being copied, this clause into the

Chinese copy, which was by the Chinese not suspected, so was entirely overlooked. "It is in addition permitted to French missionaries to rent and purchase land in all the provinces, and to erect buildings thereon at pleasure." This unjustifiable duplicity has produced the result it might have been expected to and that was to make all Christian missionaries so odious to the authorities that they are disposed to wink at the wholesale destruction of all the various forms of missionaries and their whole establishments, by any ignorant mob, and this mob is made furious by various rumors of outrages, perhaps without much reason, but are sufficient to cause an immense destruction of both life and property, and may, in the end involve Christian nations in a sanguinary war such as religious frenzy has always produced. It is proper to inquire "where does the Christian missionary derive any authority to force his unwelcome presence among nations remote from his own?" It is found in the last two verses of the gospel by Matthew, which in the revised version is, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The rascally revisers dare not endorse what the former version made Mark say about this, so they only endorsed the last chapter of Mark as far as the 9th verse. This whole quotation is a recent invention, for it is a flat contradiction to the teaching of this same person in the 10th chapter of Matthew, and in the 9th and 10th of Luke. These two directions were asserted to have been made by Jesus when he was human and could talk, but these directions only included Jews, and these who were sent out were forbidden to even enter into any city of the Gentiles, or to heal any of their sick. This last command was made, if at all, after the resurrection, and is wholly untrue, and inconsistent, if you are going to insist on inspiration, and if not, these crusades are not only unwarranted, but are an unspeakable outrage. Just for a moment look at the situation. A Christian of any kind is nothing but a half crazy fanatic, and when he develops into a missionary, under the impulse and direction of the theologian, and has added this sense of duty to his awakened sensibility, he becomes entirely demented with dwelling on this one idea to the exclusion of all common sense, and therefore it is not a question to him, or the ones behind him, whether his labors and sacrifices are to be a gain or loss to civilization, for he is a subject of a higher power than any statesman or diplomatist of this world. All he has to do to refute all comers is to refer them to this one verse of scripture which in his judgment cuts the ground away from all criticism and renders argument

superfluous. Obedience to this supreme command is the final and only test to which he will submit his action. It is useless to point out to him that the selection of a single passage from the closing word of the founder of one faith as the sanction of a movement against all other faiths, is at best only a dangerous experiment. Equally useless is it to remind him that Christ, himself, when sending his twelve disciples among only their own nation, to the exclusion of all other individuals, even was smart enough to anticipate poor success, and gave directions in case any hesitation or reluctance should develop to immediately abandon any further effort, and to make it appear more ridiculous, he directed them to leave what dust might be on their feet behind them. They were strictly prohibited from causing any trouble to result in international or other strife, but the modern missionary having the treaty of his government behind him, to act as a protection to his person, ignores such a slight consequence as that his government should become involved in international dispute, or even war, for these are only a feather's weight in the scale compared with the great final issue at stake, which his vivid imagination pictures to him as the spiritual regeneration of not only individuals, but a vast country containing a mighty population, steeped in ignorance, heathenism and sin.

Morrison, the first Protestant, went to China in 1807, and in 1890 there were 1,300. The extermination of these seems to have been fully decided on, by late movements, let the result to the government of the country, be as it may, for it cannot possibly be worse than a continuation and indefinite expansion of this unwelcome element of discord among those, who, without this foreign element of discord were contented and happy. This missionary question, like all others, has two or more sides, those who go to China, and other such civilized lands, adopt an attitude of implacable hostility to all native religions and ethics, ignoring alike their virtuous aspects and influences, the all powerful hold which these have acquired upon the national character by antiquity, more especially in their ancestor worship, which is so strong among the Chinese that it amounts to superstitious reverence. All this and others like this, is not only ignored, but is treated with contempt. The Chinaman is entirely content with his own religion, and asks only to be let alone, but this missionary propaganda, instead of letting him alone, attacks all he holds most dear, Confucius, long before any Christ was even thought of, taught him the whole duty of man to the family and the state.

The missionary upsets all this social order, and causes the same result in families who apostatize from their former religion, as Christ directed in so many words in Matthew 10, 35: "I am come to set a



man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." What a recommendation that is to a Chinaman, and that always operates in that way. You must not doubt a Christian priest, better lose all family ties than lose your immortal soul, is the alternative, you must choose one or the other, for you cannot have both. What sort of a reception do you think any Pagan or Mahometan priest would have among orthodox Christians, who should commence their crusade by denouncing the Bible and the apostles creed? This is a parallel to what all missionaries are doing, if there is a Bible or sacred book, and if there is none they make one. Morrison actually made a Chinese Bible in 1823, or what is equivalent, translated alone the Christian Bible into Chinese.

What a monstrosity that was for one man alone to do such a mighty work, when it took seventy-two translators, each one of which was a smarter man than Morrison, to translate the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek, and that work was so imperfectly done that many revisions have since been made, and it is still full of contradiction and error. When the Jesuits found out the Chinese language had no word to convey the idea of God, they gave them words signifying Lord of heaven. The American translator coined a word that signified True Spirit, and then the English theologian came along and made his word that signified Supreme Lord, and that is as near the Chinese conception of God as it is possible to get, and when you extend this process to the whole system, nothing but utter confusion is possible. This whole scheme of translation and revision of sacred books, so-called, is only an organized system of fraud, robbery and imposition, whoever does it or for whom it is done, and the original writing is the greatest fraud of all. Such is the condition that ignorance and poverty reduces the human animal, where ever found a prey to superstition, imposition, robbery, and injustice of every description, and such is the condition the priest is endeavoring to make perpetual by withholding and preventing his elevation, by instructing him and enlightening his intellect. Nothing but science in its various departments simplified and put before the adult mind, that has been left unimpressed with any form and degree of religious instruction, can stimulate and cultivate the desire to learn, and no learning, but such as some form of science can impart is of any value. If all missionaries were teachers of science instead of religion, no possible harm could be done to any mortal. There never was a scientist who was either superstitious or fanatical, and there never was a published scientific work that was untrue for proof is to be found in every statement when the investigation required is had to reach a demonstration, but no scientist ever adopted the role of missionary, to instruct the



benighted, in foreign lands, and until they do so missionary instruction has nothing but a pernicious effect, but none of these who go to teach religion have any perception, or at best only a faint perception of any learning, but what they derive from the Bible, and that has no tendency alone to elevate or civilize barbarians, and would not have if they could comprehend it, for it is never taught in a rudimentary form, for it is impossible to reduce it from mystery to simplicity.

On the contrary, science must always begin with the rudiments, and at the opposite, and when fully developed never reaches mystery, but instead demonstration or proof, and if introduced into any civilized land with as much energy and determination as the worthless schemes of the soul's salvation are, would attract and instruct the highest and best who now entirely neglect any interest except to oppose any missionary movement. Such sciences as mathematics and astronomy had their origin in pagan lands, and to some extent navigation was able to invent the mariner's compass, but could not apply it for want of ability to construct ships. Printing with movable types was known to the Chinese 2,000 years ago, but they still print as they did at first, for want of suitable instruction, but a long list of sciences are still unknown, and would be gladly welcomed by the learned among the oriental nations, who only despise all the missionaries gabble about to such as they can persuade or hire to listen to them, and not only so, but we will extend this branch of learning to our own country and imagine what a vast increase of general intelligence would immediately be realized if instead of the unintelligible harangues the audiences are compelled to listen to from Sabbath to Sabbath, in our most popular churches, these audiences were supplied with competent instructors in science instead of theology. Far less money would be required for this change, and far more benefit would result. The strict enforcement of the Sunday laws would not be required for the saloons would remain closed for want of customers, the summer resorts would languish for the same reason. Let not the preachers of the gospel lay the flattering unction to their souls, that the large audiences that are sometimes there on special occasions, are there to hear the music of his voice, which is so sweet to himself, but rather are there to hear the expert music which is the main attraction to at least half of every audience, who find in that an elevating and refining influence. Experience has conclusively demonstrated that expensive music is a good investment as an accessory to poor preaching, and notwithstanding these strangers who are so cordially invited and welcomed on the printed programme, are always insulted by having the collection plate put under his nose, with organ accompaniment, at every service, an equivalent is received by some cultivated music rendered by a fine

organ and expert vocalists that is at least an imaginary benefit on the whole.

Suppose an admission ticket was required before any person could enter a church, as is the case with the theater or a celebrated scientist lecture, how many would be there. On the other hand, suppose the theater or lecture was free, what building could hold the audience. On this account the managers in both cases are obliged to make the one free and the other costly, and the result is the one that is the most costly, is the best attended by the best people, and the rabble go to the church because it is free and of no value to offset even that trouble, and the preacher, like his counterpart, the missionary, is haranguing an audience not capable of comprehending what he is driving at, in his address, but fully comprehend what the collection plate is intended for.

When Christianity follows commerce into any barbarous country, it carries with it so many Christian vices, that any partial, imaginary benefit, is neutralized. No one in these lands has ever asked any missionary to come to them, and where they have, unasked, thrust their unwelcome presence, they have taught them how to play cards, so as to cheat the unskilled novice. Prize fighting is another Christian land accomplishment, and whether by dueling with any deadly weapons, or by such weapons and brute force as nature has provided, is unknown in any country where Christianity and the Bible has never been introduced. The Gladiators of Rome and Greece fought, as condemned criminals, for victory, which secured to the victor, pardon and continued life, but never for money, or to be the champion of the country for brute force and physical endurance. Such motives as these are Christian in their introduction and application, but the motive of the Gladiator, and the inspiration that caused him to put forth his best efforts, was to secure liberty and restoration to his home and family, and incidentally receive the applause of the spectators, and while this practice, in some of its aspects, was revolting to the instincts of cultivated society, as it existed when this system of legal punishment for crime was adopted, it was no more so than public execution of criminals was then, or now is, and is only referred to, to show that no superiority is found in Christian civilization, and also to show that there are glaring blemishes in all forms of civilization, equal with humanity in a savage state in some respects. It is a common practice for Christian priests to boast of the influence of the Bible to elevate and refine the human race, in one special direction, for instance, the advancement of musical culture.

Music, like sculpture, is an art, and these, with painting, are, if you please to so call them, fine arts, and not a special discovery, but more in the nature of a development, and has no more reference to religion of

any kind than architecture has, and no finer specimens of shrines or temples, or of other artistic decorations and sculpture, can be found on earth, in any period of human society, than were built and had perished ages before Christianity existed, and at this very time the Hindoos can excel in splendor and cost, in their ordinary shrines and public edifices, any thing any Christian nation has ever produced, or are likely to ever produce. Nothing is more common, or more unutterably vile and misleading, than is the practice of the orthodox priest to compare the outward conduct of their converts, or those who pretend to have experienced the new birth, as the result of this evangelistic crusade before and after conversion, and claim credit for being the cause of such change, and brag in their annual reports how many they have recovered to keep the number equal, at least, to the losses by death or apostacy. This outward change from profanity and general cussedness is nearly all by fear alone, operating on a depraved intellect, made so by debauchery, and when this fear subsides, a return to former habits is nearly universal, so that a change produced by such means is of no value. On the other hand, when a man of irreproachable, outward conduct, pretends to have discovered his lost condition, and accepts the terms on which salvation is offered, no change of conduct is perceptible, but more caution is used if this person is naturally a cheat and a rogue, and such caution overcomes any suspicion of dishonesty, for before he was irreproachable and now in consequence of his professed change he is not.

On account of the universally admitted proposition, that every grade of the human family has the capacity to use a faculty or endowment which he calls the reasoning faculty, he has assumed and endeavored to propagate and maintain the assumption, that he alone of all the animals have this gift or endowment, for it is to his satisfaction or sufficiently demonstrated that he is superior in that respect to all other living organisms, and not only is that the case, but he is also able to make progress or advancement in knowledge of various kinds within his capacity, and also anticipate and provide for future wants and emergencies, and surround himself with safeguards for his protection, and luxuries, for his comfort. The naturalist is able to show that this assumption is in a great measure unfounded, for many animals besides man, in proportion to their needs, have what to them is equivalent to the reason in man, and many grades of men, and in fact in most grades of men, some individuals are found whose instincts are beneath many of the best specimens of some orders of brutes; so that this claim of superiority is in some respects unfounded. It is requisite and important in the examination of this subject to have at least some acquaintance, and the more intimate and complete the better, with the comparatively new embryo

science of evolution, or development, which has in the short time of twenty-five years only, which has elapsed since the first publication of the discoveries of Darwin and others of the origin of species, has now reached the stage of probability so as to cause it to be adopted by the greater part of the various branches of scientists, and the more extensive and thorough this examination is, the more profound the conviction becomes that all former theological teachings relating to the human soul, its supreme value or worth, and its final destiny, have been, and still are, without any substantial foundation, and that this universal belief in the existence of the human soul was like all other of the theological teachings, a mere abstraction or assumption entirely destitute of proof or even probability, and when the further preposterous assumption that this soul was immortal or undying was added to the others, it caused the inquiry—why a future existence was necessary, and hence came the false assumption of an eternity at the close of time, to each one, in which the adjustment of the inequalities of rewards and punishments were to be ascertained and adjusted, and this in turn led to the establishment of the priestly office and the various preparatory performances of rites instituted by the church, as a prescription to cure the malady of sin, and erase the stain, and restore the lost purity, so as to fit it for the society of the pure angels who had never sinned, and the redeemer, who had redeemed them.

Ever since the human animal became sufficiently developed from the lower form of animal, from which he by gradual development, through a long series of ages, finally emerged, to comprehend that he was a thinking being, and endowed with some degree of the perceptive faculty and had reflective capacity, he has been inquiring from whence and whom he derived these endowments; and as he has now advanced after a long succession of ages so far beyond what he was at first, and one after another hitherto undiscovered faculty has been added to the best specimens of the race in any given period, till the present comparatively perfect condition of mental ability has been reached, and still his anxious inquiry is no nearer a satisfactory answer than it was at first, it seems proper to inquire into the reason of failure of past efforts, and also whether any future efforts in this direction give any better promise of satisfactory results.

That anatomical portion of the human organism which the ignorant boobies who wrote the Bible, whoever they were, have in that document named the heart, when they should have named it the brain, for there is no more reason to suppose that the heart is the seat of mental ability than that the liver is, or the stomach, but in all the animals the brain is the only seat of intelligence, and the faculty with which they



are furnished is called instinct, and is the same in kind as the human animal has, only differing in degree, on account of the amount of the brain, in proportion to the bulk of the human brain bears to the whole structure, and also the quality or capacity of the brain of the human animal is greater in proportion, on account of the food, which is the source from which all intelligence is derived. The faculty in all grades of animals below the human, which causes all their various observed peculiarities, is named instinct in the human animal, is named soul in religious use, but in all other uses of secular kinds is called mind, and is merely the expansion of the natural instinct common to all animals, to a greater or less extent, as the proportion of the brain in quantity or quality bears to the whole structure, and also in proportion as the outward surroundings are favorable or otherwise to the development of the several kinds of instinct, adapted to such beings or order of beings, and as the human animal has been situated so as to produce in him the necessity for a more full development of the intellectual faculties, that make him able to rise above those that in some measure approach him, but yet are still below him in mental capacity, so this discovered superiority has caused him to assume the false and unwarranted belief that this faculty, which is falsely named soul, is a direct gift or endowment of the supernatural God, that another false assumption has made it appear to him a living reality.

All this false system, or way of reasoning, has been the chief cause of all the solicitude and anxiety about the immortal nature of this soul, and its condition in a future life, which another false assumption has invented, to endeavor to give stability to still another outrageously false assumption called immortality, or never dying, as the word means. These several assumptions are all based on one greater than all the rest, which is that this God given soul, this never dying soul, is given to man, but withheld from every other animal, or is a portion of the divine nature, a direct emanation of all the qualities that distinguish the most highly gifted specimens of the human from all other animals, and is therefore the most valuable of all the attainments hitherto possessed, and as the giver of this soul is immortal, therefore the soul itself, being a component of the God who gave it to its possessor, returns, when death takes the body away from the soul, to the source from whence it was at first derived. This would be a plausible theory (for it is not claimed by its inventors to be anything better than theory or possibility by those who invented these absurd theories), provided it could be shown that the human soul had any other origin than the same faculty which in all other animals but the human is called instinct, but observation and reflection reach the conclusion that matter alone makes the

entire composition of this whole universe, and that mind is simply the offspring or product of matter, and like other offspring is upheld and sustained by matter, and finds its home or habitation in some material form as long as that form exists, and when the existence of the abode of mind terminates, the mind itself is immediately and forever dead, but matter is eternal in some of its transformations, self originated and self propagated, and is controlled and governed by laws that act in spite of any influence, like gravitation, spontaneously and unceasingly producing results that are unchangeable and immutable, needing no creator or preserver, and requiring unquestioned and immediate obedience to certain fixed laws or principles, in all living objects, and punishing, without any distinction, every violation of these laws, whether by design or through ignorance, without respect to any creed or station, or without so much as offering any mitigation on account of any excuse, or for ever so sincere repentance. The conclusion that matter and mind make up the whole sum of what nature is composed, and that matter is eternal, and that it preceded mind, which by some unperceived and so far unknown process originated mind, and sustained and developed it since in its various manifestations, throughout all forms of animal life, and causes all animal life to propagate itself, in obedience to physical and natural law, and when matter changes its form at that stage in its assimilation, which as it relates to animal life we call death, there is then a separation, and whether the mind dies for want of the sustaining power from which it derived its existence, and by which it has hitherto been kept alive, or what becomes of it, no one ever has known, or ever will know, and no one ought ever to care, and so save themselves a vast amount of worry and useless anxiety, which has produced more suicides and insanity than all other causes combined.

Analogy is a fair theory on which to found an inference, and as all animal life is so very feeble at its commencement as to make it doubtful if it can be prolonged beyond a brief period, and as the mind at the beginning of its manifestation is still more feeble than the body, and is only able to increase as the body or material part of its organization is able by receiving and assimilating nourishing food to increase in size and strength, and also the further fact that the mind is not developed to its full capacity till the body reaches maturity, and then declines in the same ratio as does the body, till at the death of the body the mind or soul is also dead ought to forever put the whole inquiry at rest, and it would have been so disposed of if the humbug and nightmare called religion had never been invented for the human animal is the only variety of living thing that ever inquires about its destiny beyond the present life, and none of the human race ever attain

that state of ability till they are instructed by some person, who at some stage of a diseased mind, called insanity, permitted some prominent individual in the distant past to start what has since developed into religious belief, and has in long past ages so strengthened itself by means of subsequent impostors adding one imposition after another, till at last some form of religious belief became almost universal; or in other words some individuals in nearly all races and tribes of men believe, or pretend to believe, and strive to inculcate that belief among their associates, that the destiny of the human soul is of such infinite importance, that in order to redeem the lost souls of mankind, the son of God must assume human nature, and submit to all the penalty that the human race had incurred by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, who, it is asserted, transmitted their fallen nature to their posterity, and to suffer death by the extreme torture of crucifixion, at the hands of his own nation, so that the souls of men might be saved, who otherwise must be eternally lost.

The elaboration, and the elucidation of this false assumption, has employed the combined efforts of the Christian world for nearly nineteen hundred years, without any perceptible impression having been made, that ought to encourage any of the propagators of this imposition, to hope for any more satisfactory results in the future. The conclusion may as well be stated without any further hesitation, that the human soul, if you please to give it that name, has no more value pro rata than the same faculty in any other of the animal creation, for both derive their existence from the same source, are provided with the same kind of a dwelling place—the brain, are kept alive by the same process—the food consumed and assimilated, dies or is separated from its habitation when the animal's body dies, and in both cases forever remains extinct as far as our information has yet gone, or ever can go, except by faith, which is the most unreal of all the operations of the mind; and no amount of assumption of pretended revelation, of inspiration, of desire, of faith, or any or all of these influences combined, can give the least reliable information as to the destiny of any mortal, beyond this fleeting, short period, embraced in the longest life, and the effort to get any such information may better be abandoned.

The infinite variety observed among intelligent beings is caused by the circumstances by which each individual is surrounded, and from which no escape is possible. This applies to nations, as well as individuals, causing a variety of development of the faculties of mental endowment possessed by each one, and influenced by a variety of causes, such as different food, different climate, different social associations, favorable or otherwise, producing different results in each case,

making in the aggregate a different form of civilization, in nearly every instance adapted to the different people composing the race, and under which they prosper, and with which they are satisfied, as long as they continue to be unmolested by those who claim to be able to give them what appears to these latter a better form of civilized life, and chiefly to supply them with religious information as they pretend to suppose to be far superior to any yet invented, in which is revealed that this sort without this new invention must inevitably be lost, and of course making the religion of these people, under which they have lived and prospered, and with which they have been satisfied, appear worse than useless, a positive damage. In order for any theory as to the necessity of any efforts being put forth in connection with the salvation of the human soul in a future life, to have, or be entitled to have, any claim to the notice of any religious societies, who pretend so much solicitude for the eternal welfare of all human beings, it must be shown in the first place that there is a life beyond the present life, which has never been shown so far in human experience, and it is safe to predict it never will be made any clearer than it now is; and in the second place it must be shown that, conceding the human animal has a soul that it is of any value, more than what pertains to the present life, or in other words has any existence separated from its human habitation, in which it has existed during the life of such human body. Neither of these propositions has anything but assumption to stand upon, and can never have anything better, if you reject what pretends to be revelation, which ought to be universally and unhesitatingly rejected, but unfortunately is not, and this deplorable state of the case causes all the anxiety and worry about a subject on which no amount of anxiety is able to do more than to generate a small amount of weak faith in some superstitious, unbalanced individuals, who in the remote past have had control over intellects still less able to understand this subject, and who in consequence have accepted these false teachings, having neither the desire or the ability to think or act for themselves. The vast majority of the human race in all ages of time and in all countries, under all religions, and, under all forms of civilization, are so near destitute of enough mental ability to be entitled to rank among those who have, or seem to have, enough of the reasoning faculty to be worthy to receive so important a name as soul, that the small souls they seem to have are scarcely worth saving, much less when the cost of such salvation is computed, but only now and then one in any age or country has any soul that is perceptible, and these need no savior.

It is very seldom that any author of any reformatory work, or even of poetry, secures even notoriety, to say nothing about fame, in his own



lifetime, or in that of his immediate successors. Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and hosts of others in that line, and Luther, Calvin and their associates in the line of reformers, were only persecuted while they lived, and when time enough had intervened to cause their many evil habits and passions to be forgotten, which are always concealed both by themselves and their admirers in their life time, then future generations, having access to only one side of their character, and that the most favorable side, award a degree of merit or even fame proportioned to what results these individuals have secured, either salutary to mankind in general, or only a small portion. When reformers contemplate the gross superstition of the masses of the people, and which is shared in no small degree by cultivated people, they may be excused from being too sanguine, for to triumph over the superstition of ages, which is all the reason any people ever had for accepting any form of religion, and, so to speak, give a new education to one's people, and a new life, is a work demanding not only incredible toil, but also exposes those who undertake this work to contempt, to ridicule, and not seldom to persecution and complete isolation, and for all of this only posterity will gather the fruits, and it is very rare that any such a person secures a place in history, for success is only to be expected by fearless men, who are willing to sacrifice their own present comfort to benefit the race, and to abolish forever those sombre, superstitious practices of that hideous bigotry which has always, in past times, in consequence of being kept alive, and stimulated into active exercise by the continual, persistent efforts of the priesthood, stained with blood the piety of the faithful, through an unmeaning, damnable faith in mere sorcery.

Those who are thus despised and reviled expect, as the result of their sacrifices and unappreciated labors, to see a generation of men grow up in the place of the present generations, whose characters will not be degraded, as these have been for many centuries, by a false, fatal education, when instead of the phenomena of nature being explained by miracles and supernatural humbug, they will be explained by scientific demonstration, and the senseless hatred now entertained by reason of a faith imperceptibly different from another, who worships at a different shrine, will give place to fraternity, and a generation of men grow up strangers to fanaticism and corruption, and possessed by a passion for liberty, and the country and age whose glory they will be. The priesthood in every Catholic country in Europe, in South America, Central America and Mexico, have always and do now push education aside, and in its place substitute ignorance and barbarism, till they have almost extinguished both the desire and ability to think, only to blindly obey. Where would the progress of any nation be to-day if none but

priestly, or, if you please, Bible influence had been allowed to assert itself? And this allowance has only been secured by persistent force, by skeptics, to thwart in some degree the schemes of priestly influence, for it is an undeniable fact that all the great materialistic and social improvements of this present advanced civilization have been accomplished outside of the Bible and Christianity.

In what has preceded, next to nothing has been written about evolution, as it has come to be defined and applied to human origin and development. It is highly probable that if no attempt had been made by any ancient writer to explain the various systems of the division of matter into observed conditions, no search for such explanation would now be made, for it is not a material question, and its solution would result in no benefit, but inasmuch as some ancient writers in a long past age, nobody knows how long, or who the writers were, have attempted an explanation by assumption, which is only another name for guess work, and this assumption is so far beyond the bounds of possibility, or even probability, it has stimulated some ambitious scientists of the present age to begin and prosecute some inquiry into scientific demonstration, so that in future developments of future scientists, having such discoveries as have already been made as a basis to found the future search upon, some approach more sure than assumption may finally be reached. Enough is already positively known and demonstrated to nullify and destroy the Bible theory of the origin of all created things, as there pretended to have been to the writer thereof revealed, by some divine supernatural being, called God, notwithstanding the Christian world has had some five or six thousand years undisputed possession of all the human intellect, to propagate and cultivate universal adoption and belief of this nonsensical allegorical definition of the origin of both mind and matter, no sane person, except a religious fanatic, is stupid enough, when his intellect has become mature, to even seriously try to believe any more what his reason considers impossible, however much it is reinforced by the priest, the Sunday-school instruction, or parental influence, but for the sake of policy may refrain from expressing openly absolute uncompromising unbelief, although entertained.

Nothing more positive than probability has yet been developed by this new theory or speculation called evolution, for it is yet in the stage of infancy, or mere inquiry. All sciences have been at first theoretical, or embryotic, and have advanced by persistent effort to the final stage of demonstration, and no longer need defence, for they rest on proof. While no science is complete, in the sense that no more knowledge concerning it is possible, a few are so far known that the human development does not yet require any further light upon these; others

are in all stages, from the embryotic to the approximately complete. When did human society get the positive authority to define what man might not do, or might do, without offending against man's God? This has all resulted by a supercilious conspiracy of some few intellectually advanced specimens, who have assumed for themselves a special, divine creation, in order that they might selfishly protect their own interests, while giving over to destruction the dumb progenitors of all themselves could ever expect to be. Is it not, therefore, pertinent to inquire as to the truth of anything connected with the human race as a whole, and is not the whole system of moral destination a mere fiction? Perhaps it may be conceded it is well enough adapted for those who, by sufficient persistence, can win fortune and glory in it, but the very idiocy of needless crownless misery for those constituting the great majority of mankind, who are obliged to endure poverty, obscurity and persecution, for a vain hope of something exceptional to all other animate creation after death! What a worthless, criminal conspiracy is in such a contemptible process revealed, dreadful enough to excite the most fearful consequences of retaliation, when mankind can be helped by the future teachings of science to discover its unparalleled enormity.

Education, by reason of the opposition of the priest, has not yet extended to the masses of men, so that they know the permanence and extent of the foundations they have got to knock away, before the edifice can fall. The moral and spiritual conceptions of the masses of men are not much beyond some of the best instructed among the lower animals, and all animals are prevented by fear from attacking men; and men are restrained in the same way from destroying each other, but this fear gives place to courage when men discover a weak, defenceless foe, and all men and animals fight hard against the supposed agony preceding death, and men are taught to be moral because their surest average safety is thereby secured, and the priest tells his dupes they want some special system which he names spiritual thought, or expectation, so that they can cope, or fancy they can, with normal life's ineradicable terror of death, and our fancied superiority in the possession of a soul over the lower animals, whose speech is inarticulate to us, gives men a fancied dignity. Evolution, when carried to its ultimate, will clear away all this rubbish of divine, special care, and protection, as well as origin of man, and in its infancy will destroy man's God, his savior, and his immortal soul, when fully comprehended; and why should not the priest sneer and oppose its progress, for progressive science and stationary religion must of necessity be hostile to each other; both are not true.

Mankind, in its progress of development into successive stages of

intellectual improvement, are obliged to also develop language, by the addition from time to time of new words, to furnish a name by which to describe the new discovery or invention; hence such words as optimism and pessimism have been recently added, to define opposite operations of the modern human mind, by which people are swayed or influenced, as either hope or fear obtains, for the time being, the ascendancy, so that fear or apprehension of disaster, both present, or near, or future, or distant, is optimism, and its opposite, or hope, causing the individual for the time being to look on the bright side of present or future events, is pessimism. Both of these are mere visionary or transient impressions; caused chiefly by some imperfect physical condition of the individual at that time, and is possible of transmission to others, who are brought within or under the influence of such as are employed to act as teachers of society, to a limited extent, but never more than partial, so that for instance he who makes a life of uninterrupted happiness his principal aim, is on the wrong tack, because experience will demonstrate very soon that human life is made up of both pleasure and pain in such equal proportions as to give rise to such a question as "Is Life on the whole worth living?" Consequently you are not able to decide until one or the other, after much experience, predominates, and when such a decision assumes a negative form, the individual proceeds to terminate his life by suicide, and when the affirmative decision is reached, he seeks to both increase and prolong his pleasures. If pleasure and pain are on the whole unfairly or unequally distributed, it is more than probable that this is a fault which human agency can cure, if not wholly, still to a degree satisfactory enough to prevent suicide. Therefore if pessimism can teach the world that the highest reward of virtue is self respect, instead of a reward in a future life, it does well. It always does well if it points out the barriers to happiness in this life, and that these can nearly all be overcome by the adoption of such wise methods as it can point out, and the conclusion can thus be reached that the sum of existence is on the whole a good thing.

Apprehension of evil is to be expected when any radical change is proposed, or made, in long established customs. That is the common way that opposition to such change manifests itself. Such is now the priest's attitude, and that of his dupes, who have yielded to his influence, in respect to the proposed change about the compulsory observance of a day the Christian priest has invented, and named the Sabbath day. What, say they, will become of society, when this guidance and salutary restraint is removed? Such a possibility raises terrible forebodings in the minds of these stupid fanatics. Such was the anxiety of these priestly apologists of American slavery, about the horrors that were to be expected if by any process slavery was to be abolished, which, now



that it is done more than thirty years ago, nothing but benefit to all concerned has resulted, or will ever result.

Few people among even cultivated minds, and more among the uncultivated, are aware of the impossibility of translating any book, or writing of any author, from one language into another correctly, or even approximately correct, for it is very difficult for any author to clearly express his own thoughts so that a reader may find nothing obscure. A translator is obliged to precisely know the complete meaning or the text, in the language in which it is first written, and in order to become penetrated with the sense of its author, he must be able to think his thoughts in his own language, and correctly reproduce them in the one he is writing for readers of the translation. This process is simply impossible, except the translator is an expert in both languages, and very rarely is this the case; therefore, caution is required, especially in so important a case as the correct translation of a Bible, lest a mistake may have been made fatal to the reliability of any translation. This fact furnishes a reason why suspicion is justifiable, and makes a demand for proof in order. Both the apocryphal testaments, old and new, are discarded by Protestants and accepted by Catholics, and both of these factions are at such extreme confidence of the certainty of their position that no compromise is possible, and both deny the other the right to bear the Christian name. Skeptics say that they are both wrong, mere wild lunatics scrambling for precedence and for the money there is in it, without the slightest interest except to strengthen and continue this vile imposition.

To-day the student of history everywhere, in all lands, now know that the Jewish scriptures are compiled from the Hindoo and Egyptian mythology, and these inspired thieves who wrote these scriptures openly boast of their grand larceny of these literary jewels, and of their theologic ability to ply all the black arts for God's glory, and to steal all the cheap literary trinkets that come within their reach if they seem to be of enough importance to be worth the trouble to take. How so many absurd religious beliefs have originated we shall never know precisely, but the way they have become so deeply impressed upon the minds of men is easy to explain. Any religious belief, constantly inculcated during the early years of life, while the brain is impressible, acquires the force of an instinct, and the very essence of an instinct is that it is sure to be followed independently of reason. No testimony coming from any source on earth can equal what the Jews would willingly give, if there was any to give about Jesus Christ; for they, above all others, at the time when the Christian says he lived and died, and ever since, have held and thoroughly learned the old testament scrip-

tures in its original Hebrew form, and it was through and in them, if at all, the promised messiah, or deliverer, as the word means, was to come to earth. Yet they now deny, and they always have denied, that either or any of their prophets ever promised the Jews any messiah, or that the Jews ever either expected or desired one to come, and as they alone exclusively inhabited Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the entire land of Canaan, if there had ever been such a strange couple as Joseph and Mary, they would have surely known of them, and it would have been absolutely impossible for Herod to have caused the slaughter of thousands of their children, both unknown to them and without finding its way into some contemporaneous history, as well as into Matthew's gospel, which alone, of all the writers of the new testament or of the world, mentions it; or had there been a total eclipse of the sun, and at the same time a great earthquake, opening the graves and raising to life many dead saints whose bodies had many years before become decomposed, and who were Jews, and then walking naked through the streets of Jerusalem in broad daylight, no power on earth could have prevented such an unheard of event from not only finding a conspicuous place in history, but also it would cause every Jew who saw or even heard of such an event occurring at a public crucifixion of a criminal, from believing and acknowledging that he, Christ, was not only the Son of God, but also God himself; but as it is now, Jew converts are as few as comets, and when there is one he is always a worthless, disreputable scamp, who makes a business of being converted as soon as he finds a Christian who is willing to pay, and the Christian is in no sense backward about offering money, under the pretext of aiding them, and in fact there is a society for the purpose of Christianizing the Jews, and a fund with which to hire them to be converted; and a young Jew made it his only business to go from one Christian sect to another till he had been baptized thirty-six times, and went from Catholic to Protestant, and was received by both with cordiality, till he had amassed ten thousand francs, and finally was caught in stealing from the lady who stood sponsor for his good conduct, and all this after he had been given a fine sum for turning Christian; and he rewarded her generosity by stealing her jewels, and was detected and sent to prison; and all this happened before he was nineteen years old. His name was Morris Guttman, and this account is in a late number of the London National Reformer, and he was converted by a reformed Jew rabbi, whose name is Freshman. The performances of these Christian missionaries are simply ridiculous, when they assert that whole tribes and clans of savages were turned into Christians by the industrious labors of an hour, with a little water and the monotonous reiteration of the names of the

trinity; when the real fact is that any of these savages would be baptized ten times every day for a drink of whisky, for religion of whatever kind is nothing but an internal or mental ecstasy, independent of either the church or Bible, and the best success the missionary ever had, the number saved is not near equal to the natural increase of the population among which he labors. The distinguished African traveler, Maddern, who has lately traveled in Central Africa, says the missionaries do more harm than good, and that they only convert the natives from happy, frugal, abstemious, temperate heathen, into bummers and lazy vagabonds, and when the natives of South Africa, the Kaffirs, get religion, as they call being a Christian, they brood over it, and consider it a spiritual farce and nonsense.

The problem of life has never been solved, although man in his highest development, in all countries and in all ages of the world, has been intent and persistent in the endeavor to account for the mystery both of life and of thought, which latter is equally mysterious with the former. In vain is the endeavor for any mortal to inquire by what means is the human pen, or the one who holds the pen, guided so that he can both use the energy necessary to form the words which his thoughts have produced, and produce thoughts enough to fill all the libraries of the world with printed books, and have ten or even a hundred times as many manuscripts annually destroyed as are accepted and printed, besides all the newspapers, pamphlets and periodicals which never go to the binder, and not only has these problems never been solved, but there is nothing in this age of profound thought and mental commotion that gives the slightest indication that it ever will be, for however desirable such a discovery may seem to be, a moment's reflection will disclose that it is not a proper subject of inquiry, and no purpose any better than curiosity, would be served. The human race is constantly being both annihilated as to its material existence, and replenished with a new set of humanity, by the simple forces of nature, with no purpose any more apparent than is seen in the creation and destruction ever going on in both the lower animal kingdom and the vegetable. We come and play our brief part in the drama of life, and we go as mysteriously as consciousness had its birth, and life its beginning. No explanation is ever given to us, if ever so earnestly we ask for one, why we come and play our automatic part and pass away, and none has ever been found or presented that is either satisfactory or in any degree convincing.

This is a secret which now is, and ever has been, retained by nature, in spite of man's most earnest and persistent efforts to discover it, and the greatest minds that have ever existed have been as incapable to

solve the mystery of life and death as the most feeble, so that out from the eternity of the past springs an individual spark of consciousness which for a brief time feels and knows its existence, only to lose it, and be lost in the eternity of the future. Millions and hundreds of thousands of millions follow other like numbers in the universal journey to the grave; every second a man dies and in a like time two are born, and life and death clasp hands in the fleeting scenes that on earth characterize existence. Uncertainty and ceaseless changes confront the birth of every conscious entity, and the book of fate is a closed volume until events occur that makes the book of fate open as history. The future, to the limit of the next moment, is veiled from the sight of every conscious being, and the past reveals nothing but the records of a few centuries of transitory events, like to those which now occur, as man blindly struggles for a continuity of life, in opposition to the forces of nature and the evils inseparable from all human society.

The greatest mind of the nineteenth century, in some ways of estimating greatness, declares that nature creates man without a purpose, and destroys him without regret, and this declaration has weight and value because of its truth, or its apparent truth, and facts accessible to every one seem to sustain such a declaration; for when conditions are right or favorable, nature creates, and when unfavorable or wrong, nature destroys just as spontaneously; and who is bold enough to affirm that some power outside of nature creates the conditions under which all phenomena occur? For as nature creates conditions, and always works in accordance with them, it must be apparent to all who think at all that whether nature is engaged in creation or destruction, her labors are never attended with either approval or regrets, with pleasure or aversion, but always with sublime indifference, which is never modified. Man, so considered by man her highest handiwork, is wiped out of existence by the forces of nature as relentlessly as insects, serpents or any ferocious wild beast is destroyed by the same forces, and woe be to that life, on sea or land, animate or inanimate, exposed to her angry moods, for no wild beast can compare with the sea for mangling its prey. The waves are full of sharp claws and teeth; the north winds sting; the billows swallow what the waves have masticated with their hungry jaws. The ocean strikes like a lion with its heavy paw, seizing and destroying in the same moment both man and his works, with the same indifference, whether the man be holy or unholy, a Christian or a pagan; what cares the ocean, for nature both created it and gave it its power; so that the logic of disaster at sea is beyond the grasp of human skill, or any revelations of science; and so, we may further add, is the science of life and death, or more properly its logic, for



a conflict of forces is ever going on without any intermission, in the realms of nature, and while one of the forces works to create, another works at the same time to destroy, and both come from the same source, and are always manifesting without either purpose or design.

Man, like all creations of nature, is a creature of fate inexorable and unchangeable, and the products of fate are the results of inevitable necessity, for a man is born because the forces of nature compel his birth, and his death is also compulsory and inevitable for the same cause. Between birth and death he is a helpless creature of those conditions which he did not create, and which he cannot control or alter, and he is therefore simply and only an automaton in the hands of nature, which is his creator, and consequently a good man deserves no more credit for his goodness than a weathercock does for revealing the direction of the wind, for he is what he is from the necessity created by his conditions, and therefore no mortal man who has ever existed can perform a strictly independent act. Consequently, a bad man deserves no more censure for his vile conduct than a good man deserves credit for his virtuous conduct, both being what they are from necessity, and the effect of conditions which were unavoidable. That man has never yet lived who knew what fate or necessity would introduce into his life one hour or even moment in advance of the then present, and every life journey from birth to death is made with blinded eyes, while impulse and caution alternate in shaping the route to be traveled. Impulse is the propelling power to every action in all living beings, and every impulse that stirs the mind of mankind is involuntary, for man does not create it or set it in motion, and, as all impulses are dependent on conditions, man is only the slave of these conditions, without even a vestige or as much as a shadow of free will, and as there is no way to account for choice in an emergency, neither is there any for actions, and constant surprises confront us in the lives of nearly all who are of enough importance to become conspicuous. Unaccountable conduct is a common thing, and moods and impulses sway all mankind as the wind stirs the leaves and branches of a tree, and if strong enough uproots the tree itself. Historical events that affected races and nations of antiquity were invariably the work of fate, and in the lives of nations as well as individuals a destiny shaped and controlled by nature alone is always at work to produce results, and men, races and nations are only puppets in her hands, and the greatest names in history are those of men who were simply the creatures of circumstances. Fate both produced them and made them conspicuous. The American Revolution produced all the fame and notoriety of George Washington, as did the Rebellion of General Grant and Abraham Lincoln.

The overruling power of fate or destiny is seen on every hand, and no man can or does in the slightest degree shape the course of human events; if it did, history can be written in advance. Nations rise and fall, nations progress and retrograde, and never was national or individual progress seen or known to be in a straight line, without interruption or interference to its end. As night follows day, and action is succeeded by a period of rest, so all progress seems at times to cease in human affairs, and the world of humanity rises only to relapse and fall, as history and the ruins of once populous empires testify.

That civilization has once prevailed on this globe in a higher and grander state than any now visible, is no doubt true. Therefore, when we reflect on the vast and varied mutations, historic and prehistoric, which have attended the birth and death of untold millions of human beings on this planet, well may we ask and wonder about the problem of life and the object of nature, which seem without a purpose, and the world stands to-day, as it ever has, with no good or sufficient explanation of why nature creates man and endows him with such splendid faculties and opportunities, and then destroys him without regret, and in the meantime so circumscribes his average abilities and inclinations as to effectually prevent any perceptible advance from age to age, either in moral or physical attainments. There is no end to the boasting, however, which Christians of all varieties indulge in, with reference to the vast advance in every department of both industrial and intellectual pursuits, which has been made in every Christian land since the Bible has been introduced in such lands, and since religious sects have each had a vehicle in the shape of a magazine or newspaper, in which to parade their annual reports; and these mediums are allowed to exaggerate as to them appears necessary, to encourage those who read these reports to persevere, with both financial and personal aid, to maintain and further increase these greatly overdrawn representations.

The church authorities in the Roman church always include the whole population of any Catholic country in the enumeration of their church census, and in other countries they include both parents and children, and then double the number, to swell the aggregate, with the intention to deceive both their own adherents and their rivals, and this course is justified because emigration is constantly adding more than death is diminishing their number. But the reverse of this is revealed when they report their financial condition, for in those reports they constantly represent what seems likely to be true, that they are hard up, so as to be on the verge of actual bankruptcy.

The above statements in still greater force apply to all other religious organizations. In New England, once the stronghold of Puritanism,

there is a relapse towards paganism that is plainly perceptible, and the religious periodicals are vainly endeavoring to reconcile their real condition with the census reports, and when we reflect that the editors of religious periodicals get their information from ministers, and that they report not only infants, but dead persons, on their rolls, it becomes painfully evident that things numerical are not actually quite as rosy for Christianity as appears on the surface, making it to be almost or quite impossible to reconcile the census figures with the church reports of past years; and another serious wail of discouragement is disclosed in these reports, such as the sparse attendance at the public meetings, the inroads of the Sunday papers in the cities and towns reached by railroads, the scarcity of young men of the required ability as candidates for the ministry, for it is only the brightest specimens that are accepted to be trained for the pulpit of orthodox churches at this time.

The real, and perhaps the only reason, why the problem of life has always been such a great mystery is apparent in the well known fact that man, in his ignorance, has not been able to perceive the unknown and unseen reasons underlying all phenomena, so he naturally or instinctively assumes there must be some cause; therefore he postulates one cause, and calls that cause God, for a creator and sustainer of all things, and his priest sanctions and confirms his instinctive assumptions by all the arts and encouragements in his power, by constantly referring to and preaching about this God, and both praying to him or it, and instructing his dupes to also continually and earnestly pray to him, and thus everybody takes it for granted, without wishing or expecting one word of proof, or even hint of the constant and unalterable operation of nature's laws; so that for anyone to even hint a doubt of its truth brings to the offender the anathemas of both the priest and his silly dupes whom he has instructed, and they all add to anathemas, curses and awful consequences after death.

How deplorable the condition of any person, male or female, who has been born and reared in any religious community where his reason is held in subjection to religion and mental slavery to priestcraft, and it was the condition in which he was nurtured, and by which always afterward he was environed, so that he had not the remotest suspicion that he was other than a free moral agent, and had all the liberty he either desired or required; and yet how fortunate is the condition of such a person, when he is able, unaided, to break the fetters of superstition, and emerge into that mental content and freedom of which he formerly was ignorant that such an attainment was either possible or desirable, and then discovers for the first time that he has no use for any Bible, priest or theologian, for he now realizes that the present life is the only

one we ought to either know or care anything about, and he then ceases to cultivate either hope or fear about any other, or to apprehend any possibility that his soul, if he has one, of which he is now in doubt, will find the hereafter any more pleasant or unpleasant than this life and the present moment is.

Can any condition be more undesirable than a firm belief in religious dogmas that consign to eternal torment the great majority of mankind, or that the wrath of an angry God is necessary to insure right conduct in living? The brightest and most profound intellects the world of mind has ever produced, either in ancient or modern times, are such as have been in the past, and are in the present, entirely free from superstitious fear or hope concerning anything hereafter, or beyond the present life, may have in store for them, and such persons uniformly leave behind them, when they die, a record of right living that needs no apology or concealment, for he cares not or desires not to know simply what either himself or anyone else believes, but instead says to one who endeavors to instruct him, this is only theory or speculation, and it is not knowledge; and so he never requires a priest to tell him as to what that priest only believes, but instead says to him, tell me only what you know and I do not, for that only is instruction, for I consider that the happiness and welfare of mankind are wholly dependent on an accurate reliable knowledge of our physical bodies, and their needs and requirements, instead of the supposed conditions of an imaginary soul, which we may or may not have in some other future world; for is not this world full of poverty, sickness, pain, ignorance and every conceivable kind of misery? And is not science infinitely better every way than theology, to both bless and redeem the world? And must not all the hopes for the future improvement of the human race rest on science, and is not that alone sufficient to meet that want?

This is a truth which all past history confirms, and is absolute knowledge, and not mere theological speculation, that the true man who has thus attained a complete freedom from every superstitious belief, and has emerged into the domain of true scientific knowledge, has no desire or inclination to punish personal enemies, for he has none; he has no anxiety about the present, for he uncomplainingly accepts what the present has for him to enjoy or suffer; and he has no regrets for the past, for he has discharged his whole duty, as that duty at the time it had to be met seemed to him to require; and he has no hopes or fears for the future, so that he is always ready for death, the inevitable end of every living thing, whether prepared or unprepared, when its time comes.

How unspeakably happy, here and now, every man is that has arrived at mature age without having been enslaved in any perceptible degree



by priestly influence, for this is in every sense, except perhaps in a social sense, the most fearfully blighting and poisonous influence on a large scale, that has ever cursed humanity, and the instances where its deadly influence has not contaminated every individual in a greater or lesser degree are indeed rare; but now every indication gives at least a faint reason to hope that perhaps the near, but surely the distant, future will realize a change for the better, and that the dead free thinkers of the future will be relieved of the presence of one of the ninety and nine thousand ministers, that are now waiting both for the fee and the chance to mumble something doleful over the remains of every dead infidel, and then and there utter some of the most ungodly lies about them in their power to invent, and at the same time and place eulogize to the most sickening degree some old humbug like David and his bastard son Solomon, one of which was said to be the author of most of the Psalms, and the other the author of a lot of stale old proverbs, and a lot of scandalously lecherous poetical effusions, as are recorded in the book called the Songs of Solomon. Why should this man David be a fit subject for a Christian's fulsome eulogy, for he was pre-eminently a man of blood, and, unless his historian knew of something in his favor not handed down to our times, his character as either a great or good man, or even a just man, is not to be commended, and in his own times he was estimated at his true and only value, as a military commander, who was both brave and blood-thirsty, but was so tyrannical that his immediate successors, imitating his example, and threatening the people to be a thousand fold more oppressive than David had been, that it caused a revolt and civil war that had the result to permanently divide the nation, and cause those that withdrew to disappear, by being absorbed by intermarriage with other nations, and thus defeated God's promise to Abraham to make of him a great nation, equal in number to the sand of the sea, and in power to the sea itself.

Now, a prophet such as the Bible represents the prophets of Judea to have been, always look back before they look forward, and their prophecies of what is future have simply their desires or wishes for a basis, and these prophets, whose writings the Bible has brought to our notice, wished earnestly for the reunion of these revolted tribes, and therefore faintly predicted a future restoration of ancient harmony and power, but only as a fulfillment of their personal desires, and these prophets had in a great measure superseded in respect and authority the priestly office, and become celebrated as foretelling by an insight more sure than any other what would in the future be the general wish, and that was to be a yearning after the golden or prosperous age of David and Solomon, who lived about two hundred years anterior to these

prophets. The people longed for the reunion of these lost tribes, under a king who should be of the tribe and lineage of the famous David, but this was never to be realized, for the prophets had no clear, certain promise to give, only a dim or faint shadow, enough to give to some enthusiasts a faint hope, and not strong enough to give any reasonable expectation; and so no result but the most grievous disappointment to a few enthusiasts has ever been had, and the Jews no longer expect or desire any change in their condition, that will reorganize them into a separate nation, and are gradually being absorbed into other nations, and will inevitably in time disappear, and their holy, God-ordained and instructed prophets' dream will never be realized, and as the Jews of our day naturally looked back to the success and prosperity of their nation under David and Solomon was the result of their great godliness and piety, they supposed these two princes were worthy of the adoration and imitation of all Jews, in all future time; and so the Christian theologian, in like manner, has taken the utmost pains to make it evident that this Messiah, so long expected by the Jews, and who was to be of the house and lineage of David, is the identical one that they pretend was born of the Virgin Mary, long after the Jews as a nation had abandoned any hope or expectation of the fulfillment of any ancient prophecy, for they had not only ceased to exist as a united nation, but they had perceived that David, and Solomon, his son by an adulterous intercourse with another man's wife, were both of them rakes, adulterers and murderers; but notwithstanding all this, they were very pious and submissive to the priests, as this same class and breed of hypocrites now are, for which reason the priests proclaim David to have been a man after God's own heart, and that he never did any evil but in the matter of Uriah, the Hittite.

One of the wickedest and most contemptible lies that Christian ministers persist in telling, after having first invented it, when they know the fact is exactly the reverse, is that religion or Christianity is to be given credit for all the advance beyond a savage state that man has ever made, when they know that no advance has ever been made, except in spite of the stern and determined opposition of the church, by a few higher and nobler comprehensive scientific individual minds, and the Christian, like all others, has profited by the advance, and insultingly boasts of what another than himself has done, and pushes the real benefactor of the race to one side, and not only steals all the credit of the wisdom and foresight of other men, but makes martyrs of the greatest inventors and thinkers that have ever lived. These, who are thus treated by the Christian knaves, are in reality the only men who make epochs, and the real architects of the splendid fabric of exact knowledge and fruitful

ideas or methods, and completes them by pushing them to their ultimate conclusion, and by such means advance society in spite of and independent of Christianity, the Bible, or any other influence, by eliminating and exposing errors, and by demonstrating propositions that supersede speculative inquiry.

Such great men as Buffon, Linneaus, Cuvier, Lamarck, Humboldt, and many others, set forth the results of a fully developed science, and create a foundation for biology as a science, and of its relations to climatology, geography, and geology, which all find their root in the works and demonstrations of such men, instead of the fanatical or Christian speculative theologian, who never pretend to have but one idea, and harp on that, and close their eyes to all else, and then say the sun never shines without their permission. Such great scientists and philosophers as have been above mentioned, with others such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and hundreds of thousands of others, have lived outside of and before Christianity, in former times, and in all ages since what is called the Christian era, but falsely so called, and have never been identified with any branch of the Christian church, but on the contrary have always been stigmatized as infamous infidels, as are now in these days such great men as Mill, Spencer, Huxley, Tindall and Ingersoll, and while it may be conceded that these men are not uniform with each other, but each thinks, speaks and writes for himself, or independent of everybody else, but, notwithstanding this fact, every theologian must admit that in the aggregate results they do all that is done to enlighten, instruct and civilize mankind.

Natural science is as diverse, separate and independent of theology as it is possible to imagine, for theology is a mere myth or fable, and as diverse and lacking in harmonious unity, and as open to the charge of infidelity, as science or its votaries and discoverers are, only on a different or distinct basis, but they are never so stigmatized by scientists. The infamous, bigoted wretches who compose the advanced theologians of all periods are too narrow and shallow in their mental development to find room for more than one thought or idea, and that they push to such an unwarranted extreme of absurdity that they become to men of large minds too odious to be by them tolerated, or treated with but little respect or regard, but for the present they have the floor, or possession, and unopposed, so to speak, access to the public ear, and this public from whom they draw their salaries is too indolent or indifferent to have force enough to as much as desire to throw them off or to one side, and this state of things makes the priests of all kinds and degrees feel both secure and insolent, and the professors who instruct them secure in their ungodly and wicked deception, which is to them well known to be such.

These facts above stated are obvious, and are too mildly and modestly stated and characterized, but it is both wholesome and needful that they be stated, for it is in the interest of theology, which claims to be a science, but is not, and it is in the interest of those teachers or professors of theology, who desire or hope to be something more than the mere inventors of creeds, that it should be taken to heart, instead of in a sneering way pretend not to consider it worth attention. It is a great pity, as well as a great mistake or blunder, on somebody's part, that all Christians must be classed together, for between all Protestant Christians and the Catholics, who claim to be the only genuine and real ones, is a difference both wide and deep, so that it is impossible for them to act together or in harmony, but they are constantly and rapidly drawing apart, or in opposite directions, for in all Protestant theology the fundamental or essential doctrine of the manner in or through which the regeneration or new birth takes place in the human soul, when it "gets religion," is this way: A person gets religion when he don't know it, for if he knows it he has not got it, and if he has it he cannot lose it, and finally if he loses it he never had it. Such is Protestant theology, a mystery beyond and above the ability of any human reason to approach, much less to understand, but the endeavor is persisted in so as to make an excuse for its existence as a separate organization, and the genuine and indisputable claim of the Roman Catholic for precedence cannot be disputed, and therefore it must be recognized as pure Christianity, or the very name of Christianity will inevitably disappear from among men, and the scandalous and infamous history of Romanism makes a union with that body so infamous, degrading and unpopular, that a separation must continue, and one or the other must be regarded as anti-Christ.

There is an acknowledged impropriety and misapplication of terms to stigmatize the whole who belong to any Protestant sect as a foe of science, or of the acquirement of scientific knowledge by those individuals whose means and endowments promise any reasonable success, but there at the same time must be made the charge that it is always insisted on by the priests and theologians that religious knowledge is first in importance, and secular or scientific attainment must be subordinate or secondary in importance. On the other hand, in every Catholic Christian land on earth, the church has in the past and in the present fought and hindered science of every kind, to the utmost of its ability, and so now it is one of the most astonishing indications of a progressive change in the views of the pope, or head of the Roman church, brought about by the civil or political revolution in Italy, which has taken away from him every vestige of secular authority, so that he is a mere prisoner in



his former palace, which is now owned by the government; that he has consented to have an astronomical observatory located in the Vatican, and actually setting apart a certain tower in which the telescope and other instruments required may be placed.

Is not this an indication of progress, when the most bigoted and contemptible set of religious fanatics that have ever lived on earth are forced by the civil power, in the very stronghold from whence have come all the anathemas and curses upon every attempt at progress to be made, to bow the unwilling knee in the most humble acquiescence to the demand of science. How long is it since an Italian astronomer was roasted alive, in this same city of Rome, for daring to declare and maintain that Moses and Joshua had no correct knowledge of astronomy, by the most holy fathers of this most holy church; and now this same church and the successors of these same holy fathers proposes to permit an astronomical observatory within these consecrated precincts, thus giving a direct lie both to all its former teaching and former managers; but we must remember this consent was compulsory, and the government who owned the property would build the observatory whether the pope gave his consent or not; therefore no credit is due to Christianity for this concession.

Now comes the pertinent inquiry: If the former fathers of the church have taught and maintained, even by burning and by every kind of the most horrible torture that the inventive genius of man has been able to contrive, the most ridiculously absurd and the most atrociously erroneous doctrines, what proof have we to show that the present fathers of this same church, in this same city of Rome, are not now preaching and proclaiming, by both writing and printing, all doctrines they now hold with the same liability to error and that they are now every way as ridiculous as were ever the doctrines of their predecessors; and we need only to wait awhile for the proof of this statement.

Is not such a state of things a sad commentary, and also very discouraging to Christianity, as it is also to humanity in general, for what prospect can there be that the future will be any more favorable for its spread and growth, or of its truth, than the past has been in an unchangeable church? Is not this situation a humiliating one, and a sad commentary upon this church and its Bible, its creeds and its God, who is said by them to be an omniscient God, seeing the end clearly from before the beginning, the effect before the cause. A God, the creator of all things, the founder and ordainer of his own religious system of worship, but one who knows not his own mind or purpose in creating anything; who makes, for instance, a spade, but owing to its complex construction does not recognize it, and must depend on finite man to direct him

how to administer the affairs of men by their calling upon him in prayer to do this or that, and he himself directing and encouraging them to persist in doing that very thing, for prayer amounts to just this and no more. Such is the God of the Bible and of the Christian church, and it is surely nothing more nor less than absurdity run mad.

What then is religion of any kind or variety but the false and simple creation of the fancy of finite, ignorant man, contrived in the infancy of his primitive state, in all the past ages, and in every country of the world, and how easy and simple is the proof thereof, for we have only to search the page of history to find it in abundance; for by its revelations what was orthodox yesterday is to-day rank heresy, and that which to-day is regarded and treated as heresy of the rankest kind will in the near future just as surely be rank orthodoxy, but will then be accepted and treated as undoubted heavenly truth; and this has always been so, and will continue to be so, till the end of time, which will never end. Ignorance, bloody fanaticism and superstition in all the past have been the pliant tools of the Christian church, as well as of every other form, but on the contrary, and in opposition to it and them, science and popular education have always been the true champions and the only redeemers of mankind, who have always languished and groaned under priestly rule, and will continue to be indefinitely if the priest is not in some way abolished, which can only be done by cutting off his revenues; for whenever or wherever these two antagonistic principles meet, a bitter, vindictive and unrelenting war is at once inaugurated by the church, to maintain its usurped authority over the minds and over the fanatical passions and tendencies of the ignorant and superstitious masses, who they have raised and trained from infancy to be their willing and obedient dupes. How, then, is this inevitable war waged? Is it an equal conquest by moral suasion and peaceful methods? Never in the past, but always with the rack, the cross, the stake, and all the other devilishly contrived machines of torture of the holy inquisition. That is the way it always has exerted its powerful, baleful influence in the past, in extending and upholding fanatical ignorance, always strenuously and sternly opposing as emanating from the devil each and every step in art, science, literature and education. Nevertheless, the very moment the church observes the general acceptance or triumph of any scientific fact or common sense principle, it immediately scrambles into the pulpit, while its hands are yet reeking with the blood of its roasted victims, and at once proclaims to the astonished world: O! yes, these truths are self evident. The church teaches them, in fact, has always taught them; for are they not in agreement with the Bible and with common sense? However, not for a moment realizing that such an admission is both brazen-faced and sheer hypocrisy.

What influence has caused so great and beneficent a revolution as now prevails in some communities, in this, the only real free country on earth, as to permit a poor, priest-ridden man to speak and think freely his own thoughts? Has it been the church, by either its example or permission? Not at all! If not the church, then what was it? It is simply and only the imperceptible, silent, invisible march of intelligence, caused and wholly supported by science. This, and nothing but this. Can any sane person deny that even at this day the Christian church, if it dare, would burn, torture and butcher, as freely and unmercifully as it once did, in all its ancient devilishness? Most assuredly it would, and it is only restrained through fear of utter and complete annihilation. Notwithstanding some branches of the church now acquiesces in and hypocritically approves of a given small amount of intelligence for the masses, yet it, as a whole, quietly and secretly lies in wait, like a loathsome, venomous reptile, watching with hideous anxiety and hellish hate, ever praying for the time and opportunity to come, that it may bury its poisonous and deadly fangs into the quivering flesh of its unsuspecting victims, universal humanity, and by so doing stamp out once and forever all public school systems, in whatsoever parts of the world they may be found, thereby destroying at one fell swoop every semblance of independent intelligence. How great and inextinguishable is the debt due, from both the past and the present church be-devilled people, to those few noble, heroic souls, who have dared to face the diabolical hate of the church, by manfully and boldly proclaiming the truth and the right of man to use that greatest and best gift of nature, the unconfined and comprehensive reason, without the permission or the surveillance of a pack of self-constituted intermeddlers, who heretofore have cheekily assumed to direct and control his conscience.

Let me ask one more question. Why does the church, in these latter days, reluctantly, though apparently openly, acquiesce in, while secretly rejecting and arguing against, and trying their utmost to nullify or neutralize, any and every scientific fact? Why does she do this, except it be because a majority of revenue producing mankind are of the intelligent class, and the ecclesiastical leaders of the church know full well that, however it may desire to do so, should it still cling to its former Biblical science it would soon have so few adherents that its revenues (which after all are the most important part of this contemptible, farcical institution), would dwindle away to nothing, it being a self-evident and indisputable proposition, which needs only one simple experiment to conclusively demonstrate, that without its continuous, inflowing, abundant stream of golden revenues, the Christian organization, and all others like it, would at once and forever cease to exist. To

prove this latter proposition, the dupes of the priests would only have to discontinue their contributions to speedily realize the simple, undeniable fact, that modern Christianity is existing, and endeavoring to continue its existence, for revenue only, and without such continual and abundant stream of revenues its life not only, but its very remembrance amongst men, would be a matter of extremely short duration. Just try for once the experiment on a large scale, and then form a universal non-contributing trust, and see how quickly this prediction would be fulfilled, and every form and breed of religious imposition, deception and fraud would forever disappear from the face of the earth. It is a study of not only a peculiar interest, but also of great importance, to skeptics, at least, the make up or composition of that body called by themselves the orthodox Christian church; for after you have selected out about a tenth part of all the individuals who are in good and regular standing or on the roll of membership, who are the leaders or the officers, as elders, deacons, trustees, etc., and who are thus selected because of their continued and zealous devotion to the interests, prosperity and welfare of the church; the other nine-tenths are for the most part figure heads, or spectators, but they are expected to be pew holders and supporters of all the financial interests which the ruling elders or other officers consider advisable, and when that duty is faithfully performed, very little interest or anxiety is felt as to their belief or conduct; and in a general way all who are of enough decision of character to be willing to enroll themselves among any church organization, also have enough ambition to engage in some business enterprise needing the patronage of the public, as well of others as of their own chosen sect; and if the man has a wife, she must belong to a different sect from the husband, so as to secure more patronage and division of labor; consequently he must conform outwardly, at least, to the usages of those among whom he lives, and whose patronage he expects to receive, and consequently prosper, and therefore he never allows himself to doubt or dispute any of the commonly received religious doctrines or observances, for he is too busy or too indolent to inform himself as to their truth, and too indifferent to care whether they are true or not; but there is a constant change in both membership and officers, occasioned by death or change of residence, and vacant places in both are supplied from a system of cultivation and preparation, constantly kept in operation by frequent prayer meetings, for practice; the Sunday-school, to keep alive superstition in the young and impressible children; by Christian Endeavor, to strengthen early instruction, and a garden from which the adult greenhorn is transplanted into the church, to keep vacant places filled up. Long experience and the co-operation of an educated priesthood, combined with the best



talent in a business direction among church officials, so far has succeeded in keeping alive a sickly and inefficient organization, who if the real, exact truth could be ascertained, are more infidel than orthodox, and who give what they give, either of money or effort, because of self-interest instead of a sense of duty or pleasure, and dare not refuse to be in harmony with any scheme for the material advance of any enterprise the body to which he belongs sees best to undertake; and in estimating the amounts that come into the treasury of any church, belonging to any of the Protestant sects, nine-tenths or more are received from men who not only are not church members at all, but are skeptics of a more or less pronounced grade of unbelief, but are in some kind of business that is more likely to be enough more prosperous by a generous liberality, than if it is withheld, so that on business principles it is the best policy, so considered, to be liberal in the support of those enterprises which the church engages in, the object being to secure a liberal patronage, and it is from this class of men, instead of genuine Christian men, in any Christian land, that any advance is made in civilization; and this enterprise of business and commerce with other advanced nations who have made progress in science, art and literature, together with climate, and such other natural advantages as are indispensable to human welfare and progress, without the slightest reference to any form of religion, is the only source from which any nation ever was able to emerge from a savage into, first, a barbarous state, then into a half civilized state, and finally by a wise application of the experience of past generations, and a more vigorous and energetic pursuit of scientific knowledge, and the cultivation and encouragement of learning among the lower orders of society, a fully civilized condition is made possible, and in no other way, for you will look in vain for any advance where the blight of Christianity has fastened itself on any nation as firmly as it has always done on Spain, who was the inventor and chief supporter of the infamous holy office, or the inquisition, that arrested and prevented all progress in science, art, literature, and education from the fifteenth century up to the present time in all countries where Spanish conquest was able to penetrate, and fasten its ungodly priestcraft unopposed, as it has in all South America, Central America and Mexico, who are at the present time farther from a fully civilized state than they were before that deadly institution, falsely called Christianity, was first introduced into those countries; and Italy and France were hindered more than two hundred years by the curse of priestcraft, and they now, after having emerged in some degree from Jesuitical priestly domination, begin to show some sign that they are about to accept and imitate such progressive countries as England and the United States of America.

who never began to prosper till entirely free from the pope of Rome in the time of Henry the Eighth; and Christianity has not been able in these countries to hinder any progress, for all the arts and sciences have so far overcome religious and superstitious opposition that a fair progress has been realized, and the prospect is now more promising than ever before that religious opposition and impediment to learning is about to cease; and now, if the real truth could be disclosed, the Christian church in this free land is nothing but a sham and hollow pretence, besides its being considered an intolerable, useless burden and damage, for it began with a shameful lie and one of the most stupid frauds that was ever perpetrated on any portion of the human race, about nineteen hundred years ago, when a lot of stupid, ignorant shepherds pretended they saw a mere phantom of a crazy imagination called an angel, which nobody of any mind greater than a mere idiot ever saw, or even believed in, and this angel was with them on the side of some mountain in Judea, where they were watching the sheep, in the winter time, or, as the Christian church all over the world has agreed, was December twenty-fifth, five days before the year one of the Christian era, when there suddenly appeared in addition to this angel, who was the leader, a multitude of the heavenly host, and these shepherds distinctly heard them all sing these words in Hebrew, for the shepherds were Jews, and could therefore understand no other, which words, after receiving three translations and eight revisions, have come to us in English: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will to men." Only one evangelist mentions this humbug, and he don't tell us whether it was sung more than once, or whether it was repeated many times, but they went back into heaven, and the curious are advised to read what Luke says about it in the second chapter from the fifteenth to the twentieth verses, inclusive, revised version.

With the first part of this curious song we are not so much concerned, but this prophecy, "Peace on Earth," requires some little examination. The Christian says, this babe of Bethlehem was the Messiah, who would introduce what was never before known in the world, a new epoch of universal peace and harmony. A lot of men, or what pretended to be men, believed this silly fable, and more that was afterwards added to it, and by naming themselves Christians pretended to have experienced a miraculous change of mind, or a radical transformation, which they called regeneration, or being born again, and, to give color or excuse for such a change, they invented that ridiculous scene, where Nicodemus was one of the actors, and the Christ the other, and recorded it in the third chapter of the gospel by John, and when this change was had it made love and not bitter hate the ruling principle in their subse-

quent nature and conduct, and that under or because of this influence of good will, or love, nothing more vile or destructive to human happiness than absolute peace and harmony was to be, in their character or conduct, manifested toward all other men or each other, by these regenerated men, or Christians; and this is the theory that has been introduced and held sway in spheres and communities of increasing magnitude for nineteen centuries, or thereabouts, and with what good or bad results? Individuals to the number of many thousands have considered this doctrine, or precept, so important to mankind at large, that good will or love to man has justified hatred, cruelty, and even murder, of the most revolting description, towards all men who dare doubt or deny the truth of these nonsensical and impossible stories or fables.

The nations that have been and are known as Christian nations have been the most abusive and aggressive, in extending, by the most bloody and desolating war, and the most unjustifiable conquest, their possessions, and the gospel of peace and good will has been everywhere that has been possible, or desirable, introduced and extended by sword and flame, infinitely more savage and brutal than any other nations about whom history has left any record.

In all lands where Christianity, such as it is, prevails, as well as in those where it has never been heard of, and to the same or greater extent, in spite of this empty but boasting profession of love and good will, a system has always, and does at present, prevail, by which the only methods of obtaining a livelihood by the great majority of any such people has been to either rob the masses entirely of their labor, by a system of absolute downright slavery, or failing in that, to compel men to work for less pay than the value of their product, and then make them pay more for their required goods than they have cost, which methods are a direct violation of the pretended law of love by which Christianity boastingly pretends to be governed, and on the spread of which they base the lying pretence of advancing mankind, all they can show above a savage state, when any savage nation would scorn such unworthy methods, and instinctively have more just and humane perceptions of right conduct.

Christian men and Christian nations are banded together, and committed to the upholding of force and fraud, as the ruling principles of politics and economies, and they never see any weak and defenceless people in possession of any desirable locality, but their cupidity and avarice is stimulated to forthwith seize it by force, and rob the right owners of all their possessions, and either reduce them to slavery or annihilate them entirely, when at the same time they loudly and lyingly profess to be governed by the theory of that angel song, Peace and good will.

Millions upon millions of Christian men are always in arms, awaiting the signal to destroy each other, in every Christian land, each nation or sovereign calling on God and the carpenter's son to speed and give victory to the right, which is to the one that has the most artillery and bravery, and countless treasure are constantly expended in means both of defence and destruction, and all in the name of religion and civilization and good will, and these very men, by the thousands, who most loudly proclaim themselves followers of Jesus, are banded together to secure monopolies of land, wood, coal, minerals, natural products, in fact everything needful for the life and comfort of mankind, and by requiring men to labor for them for less than half the value they create, and forcing them and others to pay twice the cost of the articles they require for food, clothing and shelter, they heap up riches and live in luxury, while the great mass of mankind around them are struggling with poverty and with compulsory privation. Is not Christianity responsible for all this and every evil that afflicts the secular welfare, the physical welfare, and the moral welfare in Christian lands? And if it is, let it cease to boast of its being the regenerating power that has elevated men in Christian lands above savages, for nineteen centuries of the belief and promulgating the fable of Jesus and his love, have ignominiously failed to bring peace and good will to men, or even to give any reason to hope that the future will be better than the past has been in these respects, for the tendency is all the time in the other direction.

Therefore it has been reserved for those who reject this so-called revelation to point out the means by which peace and good will may be secured, and to convince men that it is not by a miraculous regeneration of human nature, but by the application of reason to the spheres of politics and economics, that society will be regenerated, if at all. Instead of believing as the Bible and the priest tell you, that human society is divinely ordered, and that submission to rulers "ordained of God," such great men as Rosseau, Paine, Voltaire, Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and hosts like them, that have lived among Christians in all history, have always maintained and proved that expediency, or the greatest good of the greatest number, was the criterion of both moral and social rights, and that to determine what tends to that desired result, an equal chance for the exercise of voice and will must be given to every member of society. Human democracy as against divine despotism is the required remedy for political inequalities, and as to the remedy for social inequalities, these rejectors of sham or human revelation, as they all consider the word of God, so called to be, deny emphatically that servants ought to submit themselves to masters, or that men, no matter how situated, are to be obliged as a self-made



apostle directs, to abide in the calling in which they are called, or be content with such things as they have, and be resigned to the condition and circumstances in which Providence (which is another name for God) has placed them. Such directions these great men, and others like them, above alluded to, regard as mere human inspiration, and in reply to all such instruction, they make some scripture, and put it into practice, in which they take issue with any inspired apostle or any priest who upholds and teaches as divine wisdom such abominable trash, and regard the mission of every man who has the ordinary gift of reason to just do the reverse of all this. To fan the flame of discontent, which is a holy flame, for from it and it alone springs all improvement. To teach men that no ills are ordained of any God, but are simply the results of human ignorance, and the lack of control over natural forces, that are all independent of human direction. That it is labor, and not prayer, knowledge, not faith, that will dispel ignorance, and give the mastery over such evil as is the result of ignorance. And it has always been, and now is, such unbelievers as these, and such independent thinkers as have always stood aloof or outside of any church, that have directed national affairs, and have plainly pointed out that the prevailing system of trade, the competition and scramble for individual gain, is directly opposed to that principle of thorough reciprocity embodied in the golden rule, which directs men to do to others as they require others to do by them, which has always been inculcated by every moralist as being the foundation of justice and equity between man, long before any Christ or even Jew existed, and pretends to have been first discovered and promulgated in the Christian system.

It is not only useless, but a great moral injustice, to teach or preach any such rubbish as is contained in that bundle of absurd teachings called by Christians the sermon on the mount, when the very existence of all human society depends upon the constant violation of such absurd precepts, and Christianity, as it is taught, practiced and administered, and on which society in every Christian land is founded, is directly contrary and also directly destructive to human welfare, and every way a damage and expensive burden and clog to human advancement; but it affords to some individuals an imaginary protection and comfort, and to many the means of securing an income to enable them to maintain a numerous family in extravagance and luxury, and give nothing valuable in return; and it is still more unjust and untrue to give religion of any kind any credit for its influence in raising humanity out of a savage state, for the truth is that religion, literature and government are nothing but the products of civilization, and the progress of civilization varies in the same ratio as skepticism or the disposition to doubt or investigate,

and conversely as credulity, or the receptive spirit, developes in man a disposition to maintain and defend, as well as to assert, without any more than the most superficial examination, beliefs long established, and which have become firmly established by mere practice, and hence individual efforts of great men are insignificant, in any age, in the great mass of human affairs.

They say I am an atheist. Why? Because I do not believe in an orthodox God. What is an orthodox God? It is a God in three parts, one of which is the Holy Ghost, whom, if you should speak against, even in ignorance or passion, there is to be no forgiveness to the end of time not only, but of eternity also. This great impracticable of the trinity! Not one word, or even a thought, against this third part of a God, or you are forever outside of hope. The God who made us out of nothing, and then graciously endowed us with immortality in an endless hell of torment. The God who died to save the elect. The God whose soul never warms towards one of his children who has unwillingly insulted him. Am I an atheist because I abhor this tirade of conceit, infinite anger, infinite injustice? Modern thought has been brought into a useless confusion about a triple godhead. Therefore one had quite as well be an atheist as a Christian poly-theist, because the Christian church for the first fifteen hundred years of its existence was nothing better than a charnel house of murder and torture, and it is this set of conceited priests and bigoted fanatics that called me an atheist, because I have a conception of God differing from theirs, and they are in a majority; therefore I must submit to the unpopular odium which the word atheist implies in an orthodox community, to such an extent that my oath in a civil court will count for nothing, or in fact I will not be allowed to testify. The God of the atheist is simply nature, and by nature we mean not only stars and suns, trees, flowers, mountains and oceans, and the laws of a material universe, but human nature also, for man and man's hopes, aspirations, convictions and attainments are all natural. The facts and laws of mind and the facts and laws of matter come within the domain and law of science, so that there is a science of mind as well as of matter, and hence gross minds get by false instruction into gross ways of understanding nature, and for such reasons primitive tribes of men, under the pinch of war, poverty and unhealthy climate, became degraded, and remained ignorant, and degraded their religion to meet their degraded state. The first men whose notions about God, first the Jew, then the Christian, hears from, who had any notion about God that was definite enough to be recorded, was Abraham, and some very celebrated old Egyptians, who both took such notions from the Brahmins, who in turn took theirs from the Buddhist, and they went to a remote past to

get such notions as they had, beyond our ability to penetrate. Some of their ideas were grand, and good enough for men of the present, for they called their God, Father, and they hated idolatry, and looked upwards, and had many noble aspirations. Theirs was the religion of nature, not indeed complete at the outset, any more than a complete language or comprehensive understanding of nature was had by primitive man, but at the outset man comprehended nature with his brains or intellect, and he thought and felt according to his brain power, or its capacity, and man has always since done the same; and so when tribes of primitive men went forward and upward in the scale of life and comfort, they became gradually more intelligent, so that in a long period of time some among these tribes became strong and wise enough to count ten, and to comprehend that twice one is two, and these became the guide or priest of the others who had not yet reached so advanced a stage in intelligence, and the supernatural was invented by him, so that he could hold in subjection the multitude.

Lying underneath all so called revealed religions are certain natural elements, and hence the supernatural at the outset, and in a certain ratio ever since, is only an ambition to sustain our crude notions by high unquestionable authority. All that was implied originally by inspiration was simply that some men, as those above alluded to, who were so far in advance of their associates, that they were regarded as so high souled that they actually did talk with God. None of these individuals themselves ever claimed that they talked with deity, or that they derived actual truth or absolute truth from the infinite being, but these high persons were afterwards exalted by stupid souls into beings to whom God miraculously revealed both himself and his will, through direct personal contact, instead of through nature, or a knowledge of nature's laws, which was reserved or withheld to enable man to in the future arrive at a condition of development, when his capacity would enable him to discover and apply them, and thus be able to find in nature itself an explanation of all phenomena heretofore ascribed to the supernatural; and hence the religion of nature, or natural religion, teaches the intelligent Chinaman what she teaches to the same grade of intelligence, through scientific and other discovery, the Patagonian, the Greek, or the Englishman, and is the same that all men get when they, by the eye of science, look over the earth, the ocean, or the starry heavens, so that when men anywhere inquire what natural religion is, we reply: It is what is revealed by matter outside of us, by science, and when you compare men anywhere who are instructed by the scientific method, you find exact uniformity, which is what you never find in any two individuals anywhere who only are instructed in revealed religion, and what uni-

formity there seems to be is only what is compulsory by outside force.

In mathematics all men everywhere, when they have enough intelligence to comprehend so simple or self-evident a problem, agree that twice one is two, and that the whole is greater than a part. Some savages are not able yet to comprehend even this simple computation, and we therefore regard them as de-humanized. Then comes the knowledge instinctively, without any instruction, that there is a moral law, or a definition of right and wrong, for obligation comes necessarily from existence, so man ought to avoid certain deeds, or in other words, men ought to do to others as they require others to do by them; and this discovery was made, adopted and recorded, thousands of years before the Jews ever originated, and hence all languages give us right instinctive axioms of living, and they never were revelations, nor were decalogues ever written by the literal finger of God on tables of stone, but they are translations from an old manuscript called human experience; and the Lord's prayer, in all its clauses, had been in use many thousand years before the pretended advent of Jesus Christ, in the vedas of the Hindoos; the golden rule was taught by Confucius five hundred years before Christ, and he received it from his predecessors, and it was reasserted by Hillel, one hundred years before Christ, and therefore it was not supernatural, but natural.

There is not a thought that takes hold upon modern life and saves men, that has not been used by all moralists or uplookers by the dozen in all countries and in all eras, and if you were to sift and examine thoroughly any religion you will find that the only original thing about it, or the only thing not natural, to be its theology and its ceremonials. All of its morals, its virtues, which make it of any real value, is the teachings of science, which reveal the world to man, and hence if anything at all pertaining to it is revealed, it is its supernatural features, such as man's original purity and holiness, his present original sin or pollution, the trintiy of the godhead, the origin of worlds, the atonement by bloodshed of an innocent victim, and then in addition to such as these a schedule of prayers, sacrifices, washings, kneelings, fastings and such like useless ceremonies. These when added to natural morality make the subdivisions which are often elevated to the front rank, and make the Hebrew religion, the Chinese religion, the Mahometan religion, and the Christian religion, whereas these various religions are one, except in these superadded and these peculiar notions, which no one can attempt to prove are of any value, and pretend they were revealed to be necessary and valuable, by supernatural or superior beings. The Christian tells you that God did reveal in old times, to certain holy men, certain facts which he did not or could not reveal to all men through or by nature;



yet all men are to be vastly affected by these very half or specially revealed truths.

The religion of nature every man gets according to the measure of his ability and need. The supernatural no man gets except by chance of locality. What a farce and absurdity! The battling and quarreling has been about or between professed revelations, so you must see that the pious murdering has all been done by supernaturalism, and the degradation of manhood to the level of the monkey has not been done by natural religion, but in the name of certain facts or professed facts above nature. Science gets at the facts in nature by long, laborious, careful examination, with microscopes, telescopes, spectroscopes and other appliances, to help us to penetrate into the distant domain of nature, and thus establish truths, while theologians, without any appliances, merely speculate, and a hundred or a thousand stupid monks will gather around a miserable table, and gnaw a naked bone and eat a crust, to merely preserve life, and then contradict and persecute science and refer all questions to supernatural revelation. This is child science, such as the savage has, who is only a full grown child, and his science only superstition. The sun is his god, and the dead heroes go to the stars, and the gods go to war. This is the only kind of science both the priest and his dupes are satisfied with. Their brains are lacking in the cell development, and are in a mass, so no blood circulates more than in so much clay, and he consequently is too indolent to think, much less investigate, and yet he is arbitrary and confident, domineering and superstitious, blood thirsty and revengeful, to the last degree.

The difference between this class of minds, and the culture of the schools of these enlightened times, is expressed in two words, understanding and ignorance. Understanding, or standing under, means to get right down under a proposition or subject, pry it up, so you can investigate every side of it; whereas, ignorance only ignores, or refuses to even look at one side of any question. Science says, three times one are three; but revelation instructs the lazy priest, and he too lazy to investigate, says to the dupe, three is one only. Rationalism is by the priest everywhere denounced as the setting up reason against authority, or man's reason in place of God's word. Natural religion is sneered at as a crude affair, fit only for savages. But, on the contrary, the natural religion of to-day is that religion and theology which comes from the high broad grasp of nature, given man by this age of natural scientific investigation, and comes from those scientific investigators, who understand best the realm above us and the realm within us.

Natural religion, at the outset of human conceptions, was a crude and imperfect groping in the dark, to find a cause for observed effects,

and was only possible to find any individual able to so much as invent so very satisfactory and plausible an explanation of observed phenomenon as the supernatural explanation, given to the masses by the most gifted of the tribe, more liberally endowed with the right kind of talent to impress himself upon his associates sufficient to secure their confidence, when he could impose such specious false reasons as he pleased, and hence the natural religion of our day is the summary or the embodiment of all the research of ancient as well as modern times, for natural religion, like all other ethical questions, is progressive, and keeps up with the times, and man, as he becomes enlightened by science, gathers from nature more and more of truth, and his experience grows richer and more abundant as he thus gathers. In former times, when one thought about the religion of nature, he only thought of a savage worshipping a fetich or myth, but in modern times one thinks of a Humboldt or a Huxley in his chemical laboratory, experimenting with fifty chemicals, to determine or discover some remedy or metal, to add a useful result, to improve human conditions and advance human intelligence; also of a Faraday, lecturing on a candle, to show the manner by which light is produced; of an Agassiz, catching and dissecting fishes, to teach comparative anatomy; so that natural religion of to-day means what the aggregate of the most enlightened reason discovers or reads in nature, and therefore when nature is fully understood, and in the ratio in which it is comprehended, by both the advanced scientist and his pupils, it includes God and his laws, and conscience, reason, and man. The most advanced naturalist modestly admits that he has only just begun to find out facts and laws, and the religion which pertains to facts and laws, but the impudent supernaturalist says that God did, at some definite time, in the remote past, make known his will in full, or the whole of it, to certain men, by means of instructing these men to write certain books, and therefore it is never to be either disputed or amended, because it is in this book. The naturalist says, I know that God is still speaking, and always will speak, through nature, and that his last word will be as full of instruction as his first was. The supernaturalist says, your whole duty is to read and obey the revealed will. The naturalist says, the sublimest duty of man is to listen and remain silent, while the stars are singing and human souls hoping. The supernaturalist says, your soul can only be saved by believing in this book, which contains many such absurdities, which, if found in any other book, and then believed in, would expose the one who should believe it to be considered a mere idiot. The naturalist says, what is inherently absurd and impossible, cannot be made reasonable and possible, though God should assert it. Can you answer the question. What is to be the religion of the distant

future? Is it to be your sect or mine, Catholicism, Protestantism, Christianity, Mahometanism, Judaism, or is it to be a growth or expansion of natural religion, without any mixture of supernaturalism or revealed dogmatic theology. It surely will then be tested by the light of nature, or either be retained or rejected, as it shall endure the light, and then all stories that are only a bit of historical statement out of Hindoo or Hebrew archives, will be tested as history, and no man thought the worse for not believing in their divine origin; and the religion of the future will then be emancipated from the obligation of giving either sanction or credence to such divine performances as are recorded in the sacred books of any form of supernaturalism. There is to-day in Christendom more natural religionists than supernaturalists. Almost all the great names must be struck off the church rolls, and the reason is because they are natural religionists, for it already appears evident to all unprejudiced thinking persons that there is a tendency in the head theological fountains towards a reconstruction or fusion of all religious bodies, at least such as claim to be Christian, for it is rare to find a Protestant now who will not admit a Catholic church is a portion of the Christian church, and Catholic bishops do not deny in private that you and I, who are not Catholics, have very good tickets for Paradise, and all Catholic bishops and priests in this land of liberty and intelligence are vastly more Protestants than John Calvin and Martin Luther were in Europe, where the exercise of any degree of free thought was sternly met by anathema and the application of torture. The bishops of the Catholic church, or any other, have to be careful in this country how they oppose or limit individual liberty of the churches, for the people are no longer like a flock of sheep, to be driven or even cared for by a shepherd, however nice, and they are beginning to object to being robbed of their fleece to such an extent as the shepherds have always insisted on doing.

The religion, then, of the future, will be no religion at all, as such, or if you mean by the church an exponent of a supernatural God, for a church of any kind always was and always will be intolerant. Not Catholicism, or Protestantism, but Churchism has done all the persecuting; don't blind yourself so far as to believe none but the Catholics persecute. Protestants persecute, for Calvin burned those who did not agree with him. Puritans persecuted the Baptists, and drove them into ignominious exile, and every local church now excommunicates you or me, which is the same in its results as giving you over to the devil, which means damn you for all eternity, unless you yield, and ministers are forbidden to preach who will not uphold and defend such diabolism, for, as the church holds God's word, it is obliged to sternly uphold and defend it.

Unless all signs are deceptive, we are coming to an age when at any rate no church authority can burn, hang or shoot us, for learning, and to an age when no man will care a fig whether the priest damns him eternally or not, and when each man can think and express himself as he likes, and the last thing to be thought of will be to make him conform his beliefs to his neighbors; we shall also have a growing disregard for rewards and punishments, and then the future life, if we are convinced there is such a life, will seem only a continuation of this life, and the atonement, with the whole plan of salvation, will then be forgotten. A good deal of honor must be granted to our ancestors of the modern period, for having some sort of crude notions of universal and compulsory education, but we can realize that their plans were wild and imperfect in many ways; for one thing, they separated intellectual from moral education, which should go together, giving the latter over to the Sunday-school teachers, who for the greater part are a breed of ninnies of the goody wouldy sort, too green and limp to know either what to do or how to do it, and who for the most part occupied the time set apart for this exercise in telling yarns about gods, hells, heavens, and other supernatural nonsense, because they knew nothing about natural things. The schools of enlightenment of the future will thoroughly educate every faculty and every power of the boy or girl, and by that process society will get well rounded characters for citizens. The teacher will then endeavor to understand the capacities and requirements of each pupil, and use just what means he finds best to bring each one committed to his care to his best ability; he will recognize that bodies and minds are one, and that the period of school life is only a few of the growing years.

Now, the religious education or training of any child is to his mind what any blemish or physical deformity is to his body, and no parent has any moral right to perpetrate any physical injury to his child, such as to destroy one eye, or deprive him of any member of his body, and in addition to the moral wrong, this mutilation is forbidden by the state, and the offender would be punished in proportion to the severity of the offence, if he does any such an unlawful act, and no justification would be allowed on account of the relationship of a parent; but the state so far has never interfered when the parent or the priest causes any amount of mental superstitious deformity, by means of or through religious education or instruction, for what is implied in a religious education but cramping, fettering and poisoning the immature mind with dogmas and superstitious folly, and this is done before he is able to perceive the wrong and outrage that has thus been done him, and very few comparatively ever recover from the evil done them in early life, hence they should be protected and spared this struggle that is thus caused, for no



cne, not even a parent, has any right to make this struggle necessary, for every child is born free, and there is neither sense or decency in enslaving his mind, and then leaving him the choice to either break his fetters or wear them through life. If it can be proved that any religion is a natural aspiration or need of any mature human being, he may be safely trusted to receive and embrace it in some form when he is developed enough to know what he is doing, but, if it is not natural, what greater wrong can you perpetrate than to take him in his defenceless years, and instill a deadly poison into his unsuspecting, impressible nature. When a parent asks me, have I not a right to train my child as I please? I reply, a thousand times, "No!" You may leave your children, if you will, your material wealth, and you may leave them, if you can, the legacy of a stainless character and reputation for integrity, but your opinions, either of religion or other superstitions, you would be a wretch and a monster to force such notions on them, merely because you have nursed and fondled them all your life, and have never been aware either of their false nature or their pernicious effects, for every religion is disfigured and wholly constructed of dogmas and superstition, and is both unfit and unworthy of transmission to posterity, the same as a diseased constitution would be, if done willfully.

Lest any reader of the foregoing writings may be in doubt as to the precise belief or unbelief of the writer, I will record in this place a sort of a negative creed, saying what I do not believe, instead of saying, as others do, what they do believe. I do not believe in any future life after the present life is concluded. I do not believe there ever was, or is, or ever will be, any God, either personal or ideal, or any devil, personal or ideal, or any angel, either good or bad. I do not believe there is, or ever was, or ever will be, any positive proof that any Jesus Christ, such as the gospels assert lived and was crucified on Calvary, ever lived or died, and hence I do not believe any such woman as the gospels describe the Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ, to have been, ever lived, or ever was impregnated by the Holy Ghost; and I do not believe in any holy or other ghost, or any other supernatural being or thing. I do not believe the Christian church has ever done as much good as it has evil, or that it has ever made a man out of a man, or a woman out of a woman. I do not believe that the Christian church, as a whole, is anything but a damnable autocracy, having for its only aim the absorption of all the worldly wealth and influence it possibly can, by the holy process of ecclesiastical robbery and murder, under the false pretext of caring for the souls of men, with reference to a future life, hampering and sneering at philosophy, science, and the development of body, mind, heart and soul, being both selfish and egotistical, also arbitrary, and

the direct opposite of what it pretends to be; and that its priests and teachers are only so many absolute impostors, and the pitiable emblems of ignorance and hypocrisy, and incapable of receiving or of teaching truth, or any important scientific or other valuable subject; and these things, I not only do not believe, but I am prepared to also prove; and further I say not at present on that subject, but this I say, that any priest or minister must support and defend the particular superstitions of which he is the representative, or his occupation is gone, therefore he never intentionally forfeits his claim to his salary, which means his bread and butter, but the mass of men are uninfluenced by such temptations.

It is a humiliating fact that when any very extremely pious and exemplary Christian gets any high and responsible civil office, either by political intrigue or shrewd management, he goes out of his way to make his extreme piety conspicuous, especially on every public occasion, with a view of better securing, through the religious sentiment of the community, a continuation of his term, if his office had to depend on an election by the people. For the first time in the history of this country, which has embraced more than one hundred years, we have had the misfortune to have had for the last four years a Presbyterian President, but fortunately his term soon closes, and his place is to be filled again as it always before was, by an indifferent scoffer at religion. This Presbyterian President has left on record the most silly proclamations, in reference to the observance of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, which occurred a few days since, in which the President advised the people to go to church on that day, and express their gratitude to Divine Providence, which is a modified name for the orthodox Christian's God, for the devout faith of that Roman Catholic pirate, Columbus, which enabled him to persevere so as to discover America, and for the divine guidance which has directed our history, and so abundantly blessed our people. Any man of sufficient mental ability to reach so high and honorable an office as President of the United States of America, ought to know that Divine Providence, or the Christian's Providence, had nothing whatever to do with the discovery of this continent, one way or another, for if the President had ever read history he would know that the whole credit was due to the Mahometan's God, "Allah," for it was the followers of the false prophet, the ancient Arabians, who advanced the sciences of mathematics and astronomy to the point of determining the shape of the earth, and it was from the writings of Arabian astronomers and philosophers that the mariners of Genoa conceived the idea that a ship sailing westward would circumnavigate the globe, and arrive finally at the East Indies. While the Mahometan great mathematician and astronomer, "Aver-

roes," a noted Moor of Cordova, was busy in the twelfth century elaborating his theories, and in thus advancing human knowledge, so as to make the idea of circumnavigating the globe possible, so as to admit of any reasonable prospect of success, the most eminent Christians were so benighted and bigoted as to care for nothing but to give all their energies to the worship and adoration of images, the absurd doctrines of transubstantiation, the papal infallibility, shrine cures, miracles, and such like tomfoolery and nonsense, and because the heathen Chinee had, many thousand years before this time, discovered the mariner's compass, and had passed its discovery along to the Arabians, and they had perfected it and passed it along to the ignorant and benighted Christian, and by such means the Christian navigators and pirates, who had been the most infamous set of miserable wretches that have ever lived, felt sufficient courage, at least one of this gang of pirates did, to trust himself out of sight of land; and after this noted pirate, Columbus, had studied these writings of Averroes, and had become convinced that they were founded on demonstrated, true science, he attempted to demonstrate this knowledge to the stupid Christian authorities, without whose sanction nothing like this could be attempted, and who might have been supposed to have the ear and favor of their God, or our divine providence; they unanimously condemned his schemes, and thwarted for many years all his efforts to interest powerful civil rulers and capitalists to aid him, by pointing out to them the irreligious tendency and the heretical origin of his theory, offering as proof of this the Hebrew Pentateuch, the Psalms of David, the prophecies, the gospels, the epistles, and the writings of the holy fathers of the church, such as St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and many other such noodles; and besides all this, Columbus never had a spark of devout or any other faith, for all he thought of was to be able to land a cargo of commodities in the East Indies, without breaking bulk, and he always lived in the belief, after he had found land, that it was the India he was in search of, and he died before his error was discovered; and this is all the divine guidance or devout faith Columbus ever had, and for which we, the people, were advised to give God thanks in all the churches, four hundred years after the event.

Such things as the above are not taught in the churches, or in the Sunday-schools, so our flat skulled Presbyterian president had never heard of it, but he ought to know that it is none of his business to issue religious proclamations, either for thanksgiving day or for any other purpose, for he holds only a civil and not a religious office, and he also ought to know that the people may, and very likely do, have other Gods than his, which they prefer to worship, or may be they have none at all.

It must not be inferred from the above remarks, criticizing the action of our president, that he did not act from a sense of duty, for it is charitable to suppose from his stand point he meant well, and that therefore he felt the better for having done it, but he only acted from a misconception of duty, and actually supposed his conscience required him to give expression to his own sense of obligation, to set a suitable example; but the fact remains that Christians in general, in spite of their boasting talk of meekness and loving enemies, returning good for evil, enduring patiently persecution, and such like traits, prove in their conduct at every turn to be disagreeable, spiteful, petty, and needlessly angry with any one who differs with the majority, because they say he ought to be decent enough not to dispute them, so that we skeptics must try to forgive them, for they don't know any better, and now even some noted Christians are turning to common sense, and it becomes a second nature for some enthusiasts, a sort of frenzy, to scream aloud for Jesus, under a pretended disinterested anxiety for the welfare in the next, or future life, of the souls of their fellow mortals, not for a moment as much as having the faintest conception of what the soul of man is. The soul of man is entirely dependent for its very existence, as well as for its ability to influence the life and conduct of each individual, in proportion as the material part or the body of such individual is healthy or unhealthy, well or ill nourished with suitable food and proper exercise, for the condition of the soul or mind depends upon the condition of the animal machinery of the body, which is the home or residence of the soul. If the brain becomes diseased, the thinking faculty is distorted. If the brain is weak or uninstructed, the thoughts are feeble. If the brain is finely educated, the thoughts become rational. If the brain is stimulated, the thoughts are active. So that man, his body and soul alike, is a mere machine, and a very complicated one, and is, as far as the soul is concerned, the product of the animal economy; and the sole aim of the theological charlatans called priests, of all grades and varieties, is to extract as large fees as possible from credulous, stupid people, by fraud and pompous humbug, and for that diabolical purpose, and no other, they have contrived and introduced the preaching of the gospel, which is full of things incredible and impossible, to which reason has an aversion, so that it refuses to sanction or tolerate it, and so makes it impossible for any man of sense to conceive or admit its truth. Whoever dares to say to me, God has spoken to any man, is criminal, in my estimation. What stuff! Would God, the father of all, talk with any individual? A God to walk! A God to talk! A God to write laws on a stone with his fingers, in private, on a little mountain in Arabia! A God to fight battles! A God to become man, and then this God-man



to die on a cross! Such ideas and ridiculous nonsense are only worthy of fools and knaves, and to invent them is the last damnable degree of rascality, and to believe them is the extreme of brutalized stupidity; and therefore, to substitute for all this rubbish a God, wise, powerful and just, for these astounding frauds, is the extreme of wisdom, because the false dogmas of the priests has caused to die in fearful torments more than ten millions of good Christians, to say nothing of the pagans, and Jews, and Mahometans, that three immense crusades, seven times repeated, of Christian armies of vast numbers of fanatics, who tried in vain to recover the sacred shrines about the city of Jerusalem. And as a contrast for all this fearful, useless, insane slaughter, for nothing of the least value or importance, the moral system, which embraces everything of any value to humanity, has not as much as caused one slight scratch on the person of any of its votaries since time began, and when we consider and can prove that all the doctrines and opinions of these first Christian impostors were taken from Plato, who lived, flourished, wrote and died five hundred years before this era, such as the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which the Jews never as much as dreamed of, also the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, which is so often introduced in the gospels, is in the writings of Plato, and so is the doctrine of the bodily resurrection also found fully taught by Plato; therefore, I know not and I believe not that Jesus Christ or any other person ever as much as thought seriously of dying for such a worthless, contemptible set of scoundrels as the greater part of the human race is composed of, and the bugbear which the priests all continually hold up before their ignorant dupes, to work upon their fears for the purpose of furthering their own unholy influence over them, so as to be able to rob them without suspicion. The death of the body, is no more felt by any person at the last moment than is a sleep, and so they who otherwise announced it are the enemies of the human race in all time.

Every imposition, and more particularly those connected with religion, when such is suspected to be the case, is obliged to defend its position from the attacks of its opponents, and invent plausible reasons why this particular system is superior to its rivals; accordingly, there has always been in every kind of religious fraud and imposition a set of men, more capable than their associates, set apart, and who devoted all their time and energies to the examination and criticism of the writings of those who had, in previous times, invented and introduced such forms of religious beliefs, and founded them upon written documents, which they regarded sacred, and which had been added to from time to time by other inventors or discoverers, and thus increased the quantity and variety of such writings, and which were mostly in the obscure form

of legend, of narrative, allegory, fiction, history, and prophetic devotional, which to the average reader were in seeming conflict, and in some degree contradictory, and which, by reason of a claim to be divinely inspired, forbid any suspicion of their being other than strictly true, accordingly they must be explained and harmonized by the critical study of these men, who had been authorized to undertake this work. These men, so appointed, received the name of commentators, and their extensive researches and laborious achievements have enabled the common people to avail themselves of the labors of these men, and by such means have enabled a vile set of drones, and men of inferior minds, and acquirements, to seem to their dupes to be very able and profound thinkers. These commentators have always been men of peculiar temperament, conceited, devout and industrious to elucidate and formulate the one idea to which their whole energies have long been devoted, and very few of their original works are now extant, and these are never accessible to any but theological scholars. An examination of any of these original works discloses wonderful ingenuity to explain and interpret obscure phrases, harmonize conflicting and contradictory passages, and make the whole at least appear to be consistent with both reason and common sense. By such means the Bible of the Christian has been defended, and thus far saved from destruction, annihilation and oblivion, but none of these researches, or all of them, have enabled those who made them to be bold and confident enough to dare to assert, with any more certainty than a bare probability, either who wrote these several fragments, or books, or where or when they were written, but these commentators agree in considering these writers as both holy men and divinely inspired, or assisted and instructed, to write unerringly, consequently truthfully. Later commentators have been distracted and divided, so that in order to maintain and defend their right to a separate organization, such as Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and others, it has been considered by their managers expedient for each to have their own Bible revisers, their own Bible society, and their own commentators, and these uphold, explain and defend each their own peculiarities, and assail each other, and so divide and weaken the whole body of Christians that they are assailable, and incapable of successful defence from their numerous adversaries, the great mass of unbelievers, who thus have great advantage, and will eventually either compel an intimate union for self defence, or an entire overthrow of the whole fabric of imposition and deception.

The priests never encourage the ignorant to read the Bible, and they themselves never read in public any of the smut or scandalous conduct of its great heroes, such as Moses, David, Solomon, Peter, Paul, and

such like, but parade and magnify what few virtues they manifested, and leave the impression they had no vices, and so they are referred to and held up for examples worthy of imitation. But a few men, in comparison to the whole mass, have escaped from the contaminating influence of both priests and commentators, and have rid themselves of superstitious awe, and a reverence inspired by false early instruction, so that they can read the Bible as they read all other books, by the light of reason and an enlightened common sense. Such men know, and so declare, that the authors of the new testament separate books not only contradict each other, but, taken as a whole, they also contradict the feeble light of our reason, which is all the light we have by which to judge of the truth, or consistency of any proposition.

As to the truth of Christianity, the most that can be discovered by reading the gospels is, that somebody says there once was a man, some where, some time, whose name was Jesus, and to distinguish him from other Jews of that name, they have added, "of Nazareth," and that he gained over to his cause a few ignorant poor adherents, and that he was a Jew, but that he always opposed the Jews, and publicly insulted the priests and rulers of his day and country, and made himself so obnoxious that they, after enduring his abuse, some say three years and others say only one year, the Jews thus insulted and vilified by him caused his death by crucifixion, and that afterwards his adherents avenged themselves by falsely proclaiming everywhere that God had raised him from the dead, and separated themselves entirely from the other Jews, so that it was not a mere schism, but a new sect, that fought and endeavored to destroy all others, having all the obstinacy of Jews, all the enthusiasm of pagans, and all the impudence of both combined. They spread themselves, or were soon driven by their neighbors, who could not tolerate them, throughout the whole Roman Empire, in which, owing to the diversity of nations, every form of religion was well received, and tolerated by more than a hundred different races, which were all under the care and protection of the Romans. At first Christianity had the ability to attract from among these various tribes, people and tongues, only the poor and despised, because they were an association founded by obscurity and poverty, and hence could and did proclaim the equality of all men, in direct opposition and defiance of all the sects of the Jews, who were both aristocratic and exclusive; but notwithstanding these humble pretences, the more it spread the more it degenerated, and finally disappeared entirely, and the natural instinct of mankind resumed its sway over mankind. And then they acquired wealth, so that they, like Jews, became able, and really did, lend money to the father of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, and the metaphysical quarrels for many years



disturbed and distracted the whole Roman Empire, till Constantine put an end to this state of things by force, compelling obedience to his mandates, and this is the end of Christianity, and the beginning of Romanism, that filled its place from that time to the present. When the Christians had thus been superseded and excluded from all dignity of the empire, they pursued commerce, as dissenters now do in all the countries of the world. At length Romanism was driven from the East, where it was born, by the Mahometans, and found refuge in the southwest of Europe, where it fortified and so strengthened itself there, that it inundated with blood every nation there, and their pontiffs there had for many hundred years both the favor of heaven and the fatness of the earth, while the Jewish founder of this vile sect, as they impudently claim Jesus Christ to have been, was born poor, and after giving Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, died poor, and the bride, the church, can now say, how little you resemble your husband, for you are rich and honorable, and he was poor and despised.

Man's inhumanity to man, in all ages, and under all conditions and various forms of religious beliefs, has always, and does yet, cause countless thousands to mourn, but, in some small return for this, is his humanity progressing by successive gradations, as his experience has demonstrated its desirability to be acknowledged, has reached its present attitude, and by that means alone has brought comfort and cheer to many thousands, who may well, and do, bless the spirit of the present age of progressive enlightenment.

It has been the intention of the writer of the foregoing lines, which are in many respects somewhat imperfect, or incomplete, inasmuch as he has to some extent, both directly and indirectly, stated what he does not believe, as to such questions or subjects as those which are considered of a religious nature, before concluding these reflections, to also leave on record at least one thing, or important subject, which he does believe, and which he considers as the one not only the most important, but the one which in fact covers the whole ground, so that all the others are only subordinate, and if true, or whether true or false, as long as it is not capable of demonstration, is yet satisfactory to any human being, it puts an end, as far as he is concerned to all anxiety and worry about a question, the solution to which all religions are inquiring, and none of them, or all of them together, are able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. I believe and know, that the present life of all animals, and of all that have ever lived, as well the human as every other, finishes and forever ends its career at death; and therefore that faculty belonging in a greater or less degree to all animals, in proportion to its needs or requirements, which in the human animal is called soul, is extinct and forever annihil-



ated in every animal alike, the precise instant when the body dies, and that this faculty called in the human, soul, but in every other animal, instinct, never had any other purposes in connection with a living body but to enable that body, whether human or any other, to fulfil its destiny of subsistence and propagation, while permitted by the laws of nature, for a longer or shorter period, to exist. It is accordingly evident that such a belief and knowledge disposes of all inferior or subordinate ones, such as the existence of any God to create, devil to destroy, heaven to strive for, hell to shun, salvation to seek, damnation to avoid, accountability to fear, judgment to encounter, rewards to claim, punishments to evade, about which nothing has ever been known, or ever will, or can be, and about which the strongest faith can only give a mere faint, unsatisfactory hope, for a universal human desire for immortality is no evidence that such desire will ever be realized, any more than is the case with reference to unsatisfied desires of riches or honors, that animate all humanity, and stimulate all efforts to reach and realize such desire in the present life; and the unfounded hope to see and enjoy the society of departed friends, who have lived with us, and died before us, instead of being cultivated and encouraged, as it is done pre-eminently by the Christian form of religion, should be immediately and universally forever abandoned, for it will no more be realized by the human animal than any other, for eternal extinction awaits all animals the instant death takes from it its life.

If such a view seems abhorrent to any person, it only seems so by reason of previous false instruction, and no amount of priestly sophistry, of pretended revelation, of desire, of faith, or aspiration, can ever in the slightest degree change the fixed laws of nature with respect to life and death, for one includes and necessitates the other, and the humbug or infamous lie of all the priests in the universe, of any resurrection, or resuscitation of one species of dead animals, would include all species, and therefore is alike undesirable and impossible. The above conclusion has not been reached by any other human being as far as this writer is aware, and has not been reached by him without much deliberation and reflection, and when reached has imparted an amount of satisfaction not heretofore found in a long life of varied and sincere religious experience, for death is no longer a terror, or a future life an uncertainty, and the destiny of my soul any longer a question, and the conclusion can be stated that the Christian form of religion is like all others, nothing but an imposition and sham, and they one and all ought only to be hooted down and banished forever from the face of the earth. If there was anywhere to be found any proof that the Bible, on which the priests all found their rights to instruct the masses of the people,

any better or more reliable than the assertions of these priests, or a like set that have previously lived, that this Bible was inspired, or was written by men instructed by God, who directed and so guided them that they could not err, there might be some sense in listening to a set of men who pretend to not only consider the Bible a revelation from God, but also consider themselves competent, by reason of their devoting their whole energies in studying it, to understand its mysteries, and be able to explain them so as to be comprehended by those who hire them to do for them this work.

The theologians who instruct and prepare the priests for their work, and after them the priests themselves prepared by them, illustrate and compare themselves to lawyers in secular or in worldly affairs, who, by reason of devoting their whole time and energies to the study of human laws, are by such preparation rendered capable to manage an intricate case for their client, who because of their ability seeks their advice and assistance, for the reason that the client does not know the laws, not having devoted his time to the study of law. This is neither a just or a true comparison, for the reason that human laws, being invented and made by human beings, are not beyond the comprehension of other human beings, but the laws that govern the material universe, and their application to human needs or requirements, not being within the scope and comprehension of any human being, because he was not their author, makes it impossible for one set of men more than another to either unfold or understand them. Science, in some of its fields of investigations, by long and patient study and experiment, can faintly demonstrate, and partially, at least, understand, some of the most simple and obvious of nature's laws; but the modesty of all scientists makes them admit that only the outlines of any science can be discovered, but in contrast with these the conceit and impudence of the priests is such that they brush science aside, as they would a spider web, and go beyond nature, into the supernatural, with an assurance that amounts to absolute certainty, and by the aid of the teachings of this pretended revelation, calculate and decide what is to be the destiny of all grades of humanity in a future life, when a moment's reflection on the part of an unbiased mind is only needed to see that this ability is only an invention of the priesthood.

After taking such extreme grounds as I have taken in all these preceding pages, in reference to the reality of the Christ of the gospels, I felt obliged to inquire as to the truth of my theories respecting this question, of those theologians whose education and abilities seemed likely to qualify them to be able to give a satisfactory answer, and with that object in view, similar letters to these which are recorded, and

which have not been preserved, had before these been sent to priests, as Rev. Henry H. Stebbins, of the Central Presbyterian Church; Rev. Myron Adams, of the Plymouth Church; Rev. Alfred J. Hutton, of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church; Rev. W. C. Gannett, of the Unitarian Church, and some others, as the Rev. Max Landsberg, of the Jewish Church, or Synagogue, and Rev. D. W. Bull, of the Congregational Church, and all of these able theologians simply evaded giving any answer to the questions I asked them, and which they all admitted were to all men important, clearly proving that they were not able to give any definite answer, but they all appeared in their replies confused and surprised that any one not a Jew doubted or questioned the reality of the advent of Christ, or ever thought of raising such an absurd question, but they will all, as well as all the Christian theologians in the world, search in vain all the literature to be found outside of the Bible, to find any allusion to such a Christ as the Christian world has been made to believe has lived and been crucified, by no other evidence than that of the four gospels of the new testament, which taken alone, without any confirmation, is plainly no evidence at all, for the writers thereof had a direct object in view, of fraud and imposture, in writing this mess of absurdity, as Mahomet also had in writing the Koran, or as Joe Smith had in pretending to translate some writing he asserted he found on some golden leaves he dug out of the earth a few years ago, and with it started the Mormon imposition in our own day, and which we are all familiar with. Much dependence has been put to confirm these statements of the gospels on some stray prophecies, more especially those in the book said to be written by Isaiah, wherein nearly all of the fifty-first chapter, and many other detached fragments, have been so twisted and strained by the various Christian commentators, as to in some degree make them fit the gospel narratives, but it has been lately discovered by many able theologians, such as Professor Briggs, Howard McQueary, Lyman Abbott, and many others, what the Jews have always known and have always asserted, that these pretended prophecies were never written by Isaiah, but have been forged or added to the original or genuine copies of the only Hebrew manuscripts in possession of the Jews, by some late translators and revisers, so that their forgeries may appear to fortify and strengthen the weak, untruthful and impossible stories of these gospels, and other new testament writings. Now that the lying pretence of the divine inspiration of the writers of the whole Bible is clearly discovered and made known by the modern or higher criticism of fearless able writers, and the further fact that the discoveries of modern science have demonstrated much of the contents of the Bible to be erroneous, in chronology, in geology, in astronomy, in

history, and in prophesy, as well as in all its moral precepts to be only copies of other ancient systems, the priests of all the various sects of Christians are contriving and earnestly hoping to find some means to, in part at least, harmonize the statements of the Bible with the demonstrations of science, well knowing that unless they can do this, which all skeptics know they cannot, the Bible, on which this whole fabric of imposition and fraud is founded, will be set aside as of no authority, and reduced to its proper level, as a mere literary production of a barbarous age and people, without ever having claimed any divine origin, or divine inspiration, by those who wrote the old testament, and only one short verse in the new testament, is all the authority any Christian ever had to suppose that any part of the Bible was divinely inspired. This one sentence relating to inspiration is claimed to have been written by that Jewish Apostate, Saul of Tarsus, who left the Jews and joined the Christians after causing the death by torture of many Christians, and because his teacher, Gamaliel, refused him his daughter in marriage, to spite the Jews joined the Christians, and with all his energy sought to destroy Judaism, without much success, and this authority is found in a private letter to an obscure individual without the remotest suspicion that any one but him would ever see such a foolish statement, but these early fanatics dragged this letter out from its obscurity, and gave it a place among a lot of other like rubbish in the authorized new testament. This man's name was Timothy, and he calls him his son, dearly beloved, and, as Paul was never married, he must have been born out of wedlock, as many priests' sons are now. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, etc." The theologians of our days have become so ashamed of much that is written in the Bible that they have made a revision, and greatly modified many thousand absurdities, and among these is this sentence, in this second letter to Timothy, 3:16, modified into this form: "Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for," etc., leaving each reader to judge for himself whether all of it or none of it is so inspired, so of course those who have only a direct object to strengthen and perpetuate fraud, superstition and imposition, clamor long and loud for inspiration. These are the priests, for in consequence of such ideas, which have their roots and growth in an unhappy temperament, which temperament originates in a peevish humor, which humors are the offspring of a disturbed imagination, the superstitious are constantly infected with terror, are the slaves to mistrust and unrest, the creatures of discontent, continually in a state of fearful alarm; nature cannot have any charms for them; her countless beauties pass by unheeded; they do not participate in her cheerful scenes; they look upon this world, so mar-



velous to the happy man, so good to the contented enthusiast, as a vale of tears, in which a vindictive fate has placed them, only to expiate crimes committed either by themselves or by their ancestors; they consider themselves as sent here for no other purpose than to be the slaves of calamity, the sport of a capricious fortune; that they are the children of sorrow, destined to undergo the severest trials, to the end that they may arrive everlastingly at death at a new experience, in which they shall be either eternally happy or miserable, according to their treatment, or conduct towards the priests of a being who holds their destiny in his hands. These dismal, foolish notions have been the source of all the irrational systems that have ever prevailed; they have given birth to the most revolting practices, currency and toleration to the most absurd customs. History abounds with the details of the most atrocious cruelties, under the imposing name of public worship, of every imaginable kind of imposition; nothing has been considered too fantastical or too abominable by the votaries or dupes of superstition, made so by their priests. Parents have at their behest or by their advice immolated their children in countless numbers; lovers have sacrificed the objects of their affection; friends have destroyed and hated each other; so that the most bloody disputes and sanguinary contests have been fomented; the most interminable animosities have been engendered, wholly to gratify the whim of implacable priests, who by the most diabolical, crafty inventions have usurped an unholy influence over their people; to please blind zealots, who have never been able either to give fixity to their ideas, or to define their own foolishness; idle dreamers, nourished with bile, intoxicated with theologic fury, whose melancholic dispositions disposes them to lewdness and debauchery; visionaries whose devious imaginations, heated with intemperate zeal, leads them to extreme fanaticism; working mainly upon ignorance, whose foundation is credulity, have universally and incessantly disturbed the harmony of mankind, kindled the inextinguishable flame of discord, and in an almost uninterrupted succession strewed the earth with the mangled carcasses of the multitudinous victims of mad brained error and false instruction; and of these, so destroyed, their only crime has been their incapacity to dream according to the rules prescribed by these infuriated priestly maniacs, notwithstanding these have never been uniform, never assimilated in any two countries or periods, never borne the same intellectual features in any two ages of time, nor even had the united concurrence of the persecuting contemporaries.

It is then in the diversity of temperament arising from the variety of organization, in the contrariety of passions springing out of this miscellany, modified by the most opposite circumstances, that must be

sought the cause of the difference we find in the opinions of the theist, the skeptic, the enthusiast, the devotee, the superstitious of all denominations. They are all equally irrational, the dupes of their imaginations, the blind children of error, by reason of the false instruction of the priests. What one contemplates under a favorable point of view, the other never looks upon but the dark side; that which is the object of the most sedulous research to one set, is that which the other must seek to avoid as pernicious; each insists he is right, and the scientist insists they are all wrong, for the reason that no one offers the least shadow of substantive proof of what he asserts; each points out the great importance of his mission, yet cannot even agree with his colleagues in the priestly office, either upon the nature of their instructions, or the means to be adopted; it is thus whenever any man or set of men undertakes to set forth and make permanent a false supposition, for all the reasonings, however subtle, he makes on it, are only a long tissue of errors, which entail on him a long series of blunders and misfortunes; every time he renounces the evidence of his reason it is impossible to calculate the bounds at which he will finally stop; when he once quits the road of experience, when he travels out of nature, when he loses sight of his common sense, to strike into the labyrinth of conjecture, it is difficult to estimate where his folly will lead him. It may be true that the ideas of the happy enthusiast will be less baneful to himself, less dangerous to others, than those of the fanatic or bigot, whose temperament may render him both cowardly and cruel; nevertheless the opinions of the one and of the other will not be for that reason less chimerical; the only difference will be, that of the first will cause agreeable, cheerful dreams, while that of the second will produce the most appalling visions, terrific spectres, the fruit of a peevish transport of the brain; there, however, never will be but a step between them all. The smallest friction in the machine, a slight infirmity, an unforeseen affliction, suffices to change the composition and course of the humors, to vitiate the temperament, to endanger the organization, and to overturn the whole system of opinions of the happiest, as soon as the portrait is found disfigured the beautiful order of things is overthrown relatively to himself; melancholy grapples him, and by degrees he plunges into the rankest depths of gloomy superstition, and reaps a dismal harvest of fanatic ignorance and credulity.

The writer at this point will make a digression, to describe a scene that he witnessed on the evening of June 18, 1893, at a baccalaureate service, when about fifty young theological students were assembled before the faculty of the Theological Seminary, and that of the University of Rochester, the trustees of both institutions, and the alumni in

large numbers, and an audience of spectators of about two thousand. These services are held annually, but in all former cases have always been in one of the Baptist churches, but this one was held in a Presbyterian church, and the class for the first time in the history of this theological institution were arrayed in an oriental or pagan uniform, consisting of a loose fitting Greek costume of black material, and a cap having a flat square top, wore so that the corners were over the shoulders on two sides, and over the front and rear of the body on the other two sides. This class of fifty marched into the church after the audience were seated, at the music of the organ, which executed a march for that purpose, and were conducted to seats reserved for them near the platform on which their tutors were assembled, and one of these, President David J. Hill, of the University, was the speaker appointed to address them, and incidentally also all who were present, and the whole scene, including the splendid auditorium, the brilliant illumination, the floral decoration, the variety and beauty of the summer costumes of the audience, composed largely of young ladies, the superbly grand vocal music of more than one hundred first-class vocalists, led by and trained by one of the ablest leaders in the city, and accompanied by the best organ and the best organist, and a selection of music adapted to call for the most elaborate previous practice, resulting in a perfect performance, was a combination of incidents which seldom occurs in the life time of any one, however long he may live. It certainly has not before occurred in my life time of 75 years, and I have had more and better opportunities than the average of men. When the point in the order of service (as the church modestly calls what the theatre calls programme) was reached which put the orator of the occasion before the audience, he read as a text the tenth verse of the second chapter of Colossians, as follows: "And ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power;" completeness in Christ being the theme. From a Christian or orthodox standpoint the discourse was remarkable for its scholarly style and forcible presentation of what was to be the standard of perfection in human character, and placing much stress on education of the intellect as a means of reaching that standard, but gave no hope of anything better than an approximation to it by the greatest and best attainments of human possibility, when the model before the person who was striving for such an attainment was Jesus Christ, crucified. The perpetuity of Christianity, as well as its introduction, has always depended on this combination of circumstances, and the same rule will apply to all systems after it has secured a firm hold upon revenue enough to keep it alive, and for want of which many thousands of systems are compelled to be abandoned, and finally disappear. The finest, the most

precocious and well developed in both physical and mental endowments only, of those who apply for instruction in theology, are selected out of the whole number who offer themselves as candidates; many more are rejected than are accepted. Such as are accepted are from the moment of such acceptance, through the whole course of four years of preparation, most deeply and firmly and constantly impressed by their crafty instructors with the supreme solemnity and vast importance of theological instruction. The most ingenious authors of the system that the seminary or school to which this applicant has been admitted belongs, are put into his hands, and these are superseded, as the learner advances in ability to grasp more intricate subjects, by a higher and more mysterious class of authors, through the whole course, and the result is that only about one-half of these who enter ever persevere till the course is complete, and receive a diploma. This half or more who fail to reach a stage that entitles them to a diploma, or an indorsement by the signature of the faculty of instructors, that they are both worthy and capable, are left on the hands of the churches which belong to this particular system, as the Baptist, the Presbyterian, the Episcopal, etc., to provide for, as to their future employment to earn a living, and for this purpose, and for this purpose only, the invention of both the home and foreign mission enterprise was introduced comparatively recent, and these sapheads have been thrust into these fields to get them out of the way, and make one of the most outrageous, infernal systems of unasked and undesired interferences with the right of every people to adopt such systems of religion as they please undisturbed, and ought and eventually will result in the massacre of the whole lot of scamps who venture among them. This class of successful youths of about fifty are now candidates for vacant Baptist pulpits only, and when death or other causes, such as apostacy or moral disgrace, causes a vacancy, these and others such as these, step in and receive the confidence, the honors and the emoluments which the vacant position can give them, and the law of demand and supply holds the same relation in this department of human industry as in all others; a struggle for existence animates the whole movement in this field, as in all others, but this is the most disgraceful, the most impudent and the most pernicious to human welfare of any that can be imagined, a perfectly useless waste of time, energy and money; but it will die hard, and so gradual as to be scarcely perceptible, but the influences are at work that will ultimately destroy it.

Such demonstrations as the one above described are invented by the crafty authors who conduct these institutions of preparation, to make and leave on the public at large, as well as the class for whom this per-



formance is more especially designed, a profound and permanent impression of its value and necessity to human welfare, when the truth is, it is a clog and damage, instead of a benefit, for the immense cost of all this preparation is borne at last by the innocent and unsuspecting dupes who compose the general public, from whom these leeches suck the last drop of pecuniary substance they are able to extract, for this costly course of instruction is not bestowed gratis, and in nearly every case the student leaves the seminary deeply in its debt, which in the first instance is extracted from a fund collected in every church, by the urgent and persistent entreaties of its pastor for the home missions, or some such enterprise, but eventually is used to discharge such obligations as those of these delinquent students till they can in turn, by their earnings and savings, discharge these debts, when the sum that has been advanced is returned, but not otherwise. This whole process is nothing better than a swindle on an enormous scale, and a continual drain on the income or the savings of any community that employs one of these innocent robbers, for it is charitable to suppose that in the general average of these students at graduation they have not yet suspected this to be what they afterwards know it is, nothing but a farce and a swindle, but here they are caught in this net of fraud, and hypocrisy for the stifling of their later convictions is their only resource to earn a decent living. Every graduate from a college is fitted by his mental training of the previous four years for some profession, and in most cases gravitate towards the profession of law, journalism, medicine, or theology. Such as are finally received into this last department are, or pretend to be, converted, or regenerated, and are naturally of a serious bias, and have been instructed in a way that makes the ambition to preach the gospel overcome all obstacles, and to enter or endeavor to enter upon a preparatory course of peculiar instruction, always required, and if pursued with avidity and enthusiasm, results in so cultivating one branch of the intellectual faculties, and dwarfing and weakening all the others, as to render the victim wholly unprepared or unable to pursue any other calling but that of a priest, and very few of them ever reach above mediocrity, and only keep their people from being instructed in any useful branch of knowledge, but well confirmed in superstition.

What advantage, then, has ever resulted to the human race, from such instructions as such men are able to and do actually deliver, for they are both pernicious and barren. They seem to but rarely have any other influence than to serve as a cover or pretext for the most vile and dangerous passions, as a mantle of security for the most criminal indulgences. Does not the superstitious magistrate or despot, who would not only scruple but would not dare to omit the least part of any of the

ceremonies of his church, on quitting the altars at which he has been sacrificing, or on leaving the temple where his priests have been delivering the oracles, and terrifying crime in the name of God and heaven, return to his vices, repeat his injustice, increase his political crimes, augment his transgressions against society? Issuing from the sacred fane, their ears still ringing with the doctrines they have tried in vain to explain, the priest returns to his usual vexations of a worldly nature, the courtier or politician to his intrigues, the harlot to her prostitution, the tax gatherer to his extortions, the merchant to his frauds, the insignificant trader to his tricks and duplicity. Will it be pretended that those cowardly assassins, or those dastardly burglars and highway robbers, or these miserable criminals of all grades, whom false instructions, evil institutions, the negligence of government, the laxity of morals, continually multiply, and from whom our laws, which are in many instances too severe, and in many too merciful, frequently deprive these criminals of their lives, will it also be pretended that the malefactors who crowd the scaffolds, or the electric chairs, are either incredulous or atheists? No! unquestionably these unfortunate beings, these wretched criminals these social outcasts, these vile wretches, without exception firmly believe in a personal God, as well as a personal devil, a literal heaven and a literal hell, because they have heard these things repeated to them from their infancy, and they have always been informed by their priests of the endless and fearful punishment destined for sinners; they have been habituated from early life to tremble at the judgments of God. In spite of all this, they have dared to outrage society, because their unruly passions were stronger than their fears, for not having been influenced by visible motives, have not for any reason been restrained by those which are invisible; distant concealed punishments will never be competent to arrest those excesses which present and certain punishments are incapable of preventing. Does not every day's experience furnish us the lesson, that men persuaded that an allseeing deity views them, hears them, surrounds them, do not on that account arrest their progress when the impulse exists either for gratifying their licentious passions or committing the most diabolical crimes? The same individual who would fear the inspection of his conduct or motives by one of the meanest of his fellows, whom the presence of another man would prevent him from committing a vile, disreputable action, from delivering himself up to some scandalous vice, cheerfully lends himself to crime when he believes no eye beholds him but God's. What purpose, then, does the conviction of the omniscience, the omnipotence and the omnipresence of the divinity answer, if it imposes much less influence on the conduct of men than the certainty of being seen by one

of his associates, however inferior, for he, who would not have the temerity or boldness to commit a crime even in the presence of a child, will make no scruple of boldly committing it when he has only his God for a witness.

These undoubted, well-established facts serve for a reply to those who insist that the fear of God is more powerful to restrain the actions of men than wholesome laws and strict discipline, for in every case when man believes he has only his God to dread, he permits nothing to interrupt his course. Those persons who do not in the least suspect the power of superstitious notions, and have or pretend to have the most perfect reliance on their utility or efficacy, very rarely, however, employ them, when they are desirous to influence the conduct of those who have a right to look to them for a guide to their conduct, or for their instruction, such as children, for in the advice which a father gives to his vicious or criminal child, he always strongly represents to such child the present temporal inconvenience to which his evil conduct exposes him, here and now, rather than the danger they encounter, in by such conduct offending an implacable or avenging God. He likewise points out to him or them the natural consequences of his irregularities, how his health is likely to be damaged by his debaucheries, how he will lose his reputation for integrity by his criminal pursuits, also the ruin of his fortune and prospects by gambling, and many other such reasons why he should, instead of a course of criminal indulgence, walk in the more agreeable and honest path of virtue and innocence. Such a mode of reasoning operates far more strongly and steadfastly upon the force of natural motives than upon those motives that are furnished by superstition. The same man who villifies or disparages the motives the atheist can have to do good, and live a virtuous life here, and abstain from an evil course of conduct, makes use of them himself on this occasion, because he feels that they are the best that he can employ. Almost all men in the whole world, belonging to many different forms of religion, believe in an avenging and also in a remunerating God. Yet the wicked and depraved, under all these systems, make a large majority of the whole, and when the true cause of this corruption is sought for and traced to its source, it will more frequently be found in the superstitious notions inculcated by the speculations and absurdities of theology, than in those imaginary sources which the various superstitions have from time to time invented, to account for human depravity. Man is always corrupt when he is badly governed, for when superstition defies the sovereign, his government becomes weak and unworthy, and the people are rendered miserable. When the people are ruled by irrational despots they are never guided by reason or judgment. When

they are blinded by their priests, who are always either deceivers or impostors, and sometimes both, their reason becomes useless. Tyrants, when combined with priests, as they usually are, are always successful in their efforts to prevent such nation from becoming instructed or enlightened, from as much as seeking after or even desiring truth, from ameliorating their condition or perfecting their morals, hence every people so situated have been unable to resist these mighty torrents of priestly tyranny and of despotism, because the confluence of two such mighty rivers have caused these people to sink into the most abject slavery, but little above the savage state. Perhaps it will be asked if we can reasonably flatter ourselves with ever reaching a point of development that will enable any whole people to entirely forget and abandon their untenable superstitious opinions, and the foolish ideas they have about their Gods. It is unhesitatingly granted that such a desirable result appears utterly impossible, for it is too much to be hoped for.

These ideas, which have been inculcated by the priests for an unworthy object from the earliest ages, do not appear of a nature to admit of a total eradication from the mind of a majority of mankind, while the successors of these same priests are constantly endeavoring to strengthen and to perpetuate all these superstitions, and increasing the number, as their inventive genius and the necessity of a change in these notions appear to be desirable. It would, perhaps, be equally difficult to give correct ideas to those persons who arrived at a certain age when both body and mind is mature, and have never yet heard them spoken of, or not fully explained to them, as to banish them from the minds of those who have been impressed with them from their earliest infancy. Thus it does not seem either probable or possible to make a whole nation pass out of the abyss of superstition, or in other words from the condition of ignorance, from the ravings of delirium, into absolute naturalism, or as the priests of superstition would name it, "atheism," which must be preceded by reflection and intense study, demands extensive knowledge and a long series of experience, includes the habit of contemplating nature and some acquaintance with her laws, contained in the expansive science of the causes which produce her various phenomena, her multiplied combinations, and the diversified actions of the beings which she contains, as well as of their numerous properties. In order to be an atheist, worthy of such a name, he needs to be positively assured of the capabilities of nature, and he must study and meditate her profoundly. A superficial glance of the eye will not bring man acquainted with her resources, for the eye may be and frequently is deceived, without extensive practice and the assistance of suitable lenses, and the existence of ignorance about natural causes will always induce the supposition of



those which are only imaginary, and credulity thus will conduct or re-conduct the natural philosopher to the feet of superstitious phantoms, in which either his limited vision, or his habitual repugnance to intense labor, will make him believe he shall find a solution of every difficulty.

In consequence of such considerations as above alluded to, and many others that might be mentioned, atheism, philosophy, and all profound abstruse sciences, are not calculated for the vulgar, nor adapted to the comprehension of the great mass of mankind; but there are in all populous highly civilized nations many persons whose inclinations and circumstances enable them to devote much of their spare time to meditation, whose easy finances afford them both the means and the facilities to supply themselves with the requisite books, as also the leisure and disposition to both read and make the most deep and profound researches into the nature of things and subjects beyond the grasp of the average man, and these are the ones who frequently make useful discoveries, which sooner or later, after they have been submitted to the scrutiny and the infallible test of experience, when they have passed these fiery ordeals, and have gone into demonstration, or as we say, truth, extend far and wide their salutary effects, become extremely beneficial to society in general, and highly advantageous and interesting to individuals. Such are the geometrician, the geologist, the chemist, and every branch of science, who one and all are indebted to these individuals, as also is the mechanic, the natural philosopher, the artist and the moralist, who are all industriously employed, either in their study, their laboratories, or their workshops, seeking to secure the means to serve and benefit society, each in his sphere; at the same time not one of these discoveries, made with so much skill and labor, can ever be comprehended by the illiterate; not one of the arts with which investigators are respectively occupied are ever known to the uninitiated mass of men, but these do not fail in the long run to profit by them and to reap great advantages from these men's labors, of which they themselves have no idea. It is for the mariner that the astronomer explores and reduces to a tangible form his intricate calculations; it is for him the geometrician calculates and constructs his wonderful tables of figures; it is for his use the ordinary mechanic, who is an expert in the pursuit of his particular occupation, plies his craft. It is for the mason, the carpenter, the common laborer, that the skillful architect studies to fill his orders and lays down and accurately specifies his well proportioned plans. On the contrary, of all these valuable aids to the ignorant and unskilled masses of the people, whatever may be the pretended utility or the vaunted advantages of superstitious opinions, the subtle theologian cannot boast either of toiling, of writing, of teaching, or disputing, for the

advantage of the people, but for all this he contrives to tax them very exorbitantly for those intricate unmeaning systems they can never understand, and which he does not any more comprehend than they do; but still he levies the most oppressive contributions as his remuneration for the detailing of those mysteries, which under any circumstances cannot at any future time be of the least benefit, but always a damage to them; so that it is not for the multitude that I propose to myself either to write or to meditate. The code of nature, as I call it, or the principles of atheism, as the priests call it, are not considered to be calculated for the comprehension of a great number of persons, who are nearly always too much prepossessed in favor of the received superstitious prejudices, although extremely enlightened, or, as we say, smart, on other points. It is extremely rare to find men, who, in addition to an enlarged mind, extensive knowledge, great talents, have also a well regulated imagination, or sufficient courage to attack any commonly received error, when such is perceived by them, or to boldly examine those chimerical systems with which his brain has been inoculated from the first dawn of his feeble intellect, and hence the man who writes must neither fix his eyes or expectations on the time in which he lives, upon his actual fellow mortals, nor upon the country which he inhabits, for he must consider he speaks only to the human race, and to be able to instruct future generations, he must anticipate what the developments of the future will lead men to require and appreciate, and it will be in vain for him to flatter himself with any probability of seeing his reasonings adopted, or any eulogies from his contemporaries, and he must not soothe himself with the pleasing reflection that his advanced principles or his conclusions will be received even with kindness. If he has recorded any truths, the ages that are to follow will do full justice to his well intended efforts. Until this epoch, so desirable for humanity, shall arrive, the principles of naturalism or atheism will be adopted by only a small number of liberal minded men, who are able to dive below the surface. These cannot make but few proselytes, or have many approvers, but, on the contrary, they will inevitably meet with many zealous adversaries, even in those persons who upon most other subjects discover the most acute minds, and the most consummate knowledge. Such men, as has been before stated, who possess the greatest share of ability, cannot be expected to at once be resolved to divorce themselves from their superstitious ideas. Their imagination, which is necessary to produce splendid talents, is apt to form in them an insurmountable object to the total extinction of prejudice, and this depends much more upon the judgment than upon the will; in a great number of men it would be wresting from them, so to speak, a portion of themselves, to take from them these superstitious

notions, depriving them of their accustomed aliment, and plunging them into a fearful vacuum, where their distempered mind would perish for want of exercise. Let us then not be surprised if very intelligent and even learned men shut their eyes, and run counter to their ordinary sagacity and sense.

Atheism, materialism and naturalism make the trinity of the skeptic, and are to him the equivalents of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost of the Christians, and are his trinity, and are combined in his imagination, so as to make a personal God, or separately are each a God, equal in power, majesty and glory. All these conceptions of the skeptic are real and manifest to all the senses, so as to be capable of demonstration, while those of the Christian are purely and only imaginary, and for that reason incapable of proof. The Christian theologian is never tired of extolling a fictitious character which he has invented and named Jesus Christ, and caused him to appear to have actually lived in a human body, by certain descriptions he finds recorded in what he has invented, and called the four gospels. A careful examination of these by an unbiased person will perceive that the attempt was made by the writer of these gospels to delineate or describe a perfect, or model moral character, for a sample to be imitated or striven for by every one who should adopt the name of Christian, but no writer was capable to portray such a perfect character, but left the one who they brought forward as full of blemishes, or as imperfect, as they who tried to conceive this perfect character themselves were, and consequently we have never found the Christian portion of mankind superior in any respect, as to their moral character or their intellectual abilities, from any other men; in fact, the enormous vices found in all Christian lands are more than sufficient to offset some traits that appear to excel in some directions, such as are found elsewhere, and the boast constantly made of superiority is an empty one, when the whole of both sides of the story is told.

Ever since this writer has so far advanced in his unbelief in the inspiration of the scriptures, as to lay aside that feeling of reverence and awe that characterizes all readers of the Bible, and read and examine the gospels with reference to finding what basis there was on which to found the claim of divinity, or even of perfect humanity, of its hero, Jesus Christ, he has been not only surprised but actually astonished at the result. While it is possible to find in literature, extensive, elaborate works of philosophy and morals, written by Plato, by Socrates, by Aristotle, who all lived five hundred years before the so-called Christian era begun, and their biographers and other historians gave a full history of all the leading incidents of their whole lives of fifty or more years, and agree as to their wonderful abilities and usefulness to not only their own

but to all future generations, and the same can be said of poets, such as Homer, Virgil, many others, not one word can be found to prove that Jesus Christ either did or could either read or write, in these gospels, or anywhere else, and his whole life from his birth to his death lasting only about thirty years, is a total blank; only twice in this whole period is he permitted to appear at all; once, when about twelve years old, he came to Jerusalem and got lost, and twenty years after that he arrived there after a trip from Nazareth, about Judea, lasting as the gospel of John has it, only one year, and was immediately arrested, tried, convicted and executed. Surprisingly little is to be found about him, either bad, good or indifferent, and of his teachings nothing whatever that was original with him, and no living person ever wrote down, when it occurred, a single incident of his birth, life, or his teachings, death, or resurrection, within at least a hundred years from the alleged time when these events occurred, granting for the sake of the argument they ever occurred, and then these gospel writers invented these impossible statements, and to make them seem numerous and important, the last three repeated with a slight variation what the first had written, and added some of their own invention, and when you inquire of the theologian or the priest how the writer knew what to write about a long past event, about which no record had been kept, he will reply, God informed him, and guided his pen, so that a mistake is impossible, and the dupe is easily satisfied this is so, because his mother and his Sunday-school teacher have always told him so, too, and in my own personal experience I know the truth to be as I have above stated it, and it satisfied me for more than sixty-five years, but is now gone.

In every age, since man has arrived by gradual stages of development from his primitive condition to his present, or his comparatively recent condition, when he became able to use his faculty of reason and reflection, in all countries, under all forms of civilization and of religious belief, the masses, or the great majority of mankind, have always been, and very likely will always continue to be, steeped in superstition, poverty and ignorance, consequently they become easily the dupes of imposition, fraud and deception, perpetrated upon them by the minority. This minority is composed of the comparatively few men who have been situated or surrounded by a number of favorable circumstances and influences, such, for instance, as a superior brain or mental development, superior physical constitution, superior advantages of education in both science, morals and art, and the useful faculties of memory and industry, united to frugality, and a desire to acquire the most useful knowledge, so as to qualify them in turn to become competent to instruct those who are constantly coming forward, and desiring and requiring instruction.



Out of this few superior men, perhaps one or two will become conspicuous enough to find a place in the history of his times, and his exploits will be thus transmitted to future generations, in whatever direction his talents have been directed, to render him famous above others of his times. Such, for instance, as a great poet, a great moralist, a great general, etc., for no one man is great in all things. These great men will be an example and benefit to their successors, causing some among them to become still more famous, and these are distributed among every variety of useful occupations, and are constantly succeeding each other, and in this way mankind as a whole are prevented from lapsing back into a savage state, and also to make it impossible to make any perceptible change in human conditions for the better from age to age, because the intelligent portion of mankind, when compared to the whole, are too few to operate on the whole mass of superstition and stupidity so as to be perceptible. Each kind or form of religion, as the Jewish, the Christian, the various forms of paganism, the Mahometan, and even the latest, the Mormon, is invented, instead of being, as they all claim to be, a revelation, and those who invented it, and their successors, one after another, perceiving its defects when put into practice, have added from time to time improvements to satisfy some want not at first perceived. Each one of these numerous forms, after it had developed into a system strong and powerful enough to make it able to survive and increase, sets up for itself the claim of superiority over its rivals, by its priests making prominent all its alleged merits, and concealing or ignoring its defects, and exposing and making prominent the great defects of their rivals, and ignoring and concealing its merits. This is the chief duty of all the priests of the several systems, who devote all their energies during life to this one object. In every form of religion except the Christian, with which we are acquainted by its history, the founder thereof devoted a long, mature life to its propagation and improvement, and left it at his death so complete as to need no further improvement, but simply to be maintained and strengthened, the founder thereof having left on record, written by himself, sufficient instructions and directions to secure its perpetuity. The reverse of this process is unfortunately the case by the founder of the Christian system, for he only lived at the longest three years, and some of the evangelists who wrote his life say only one year, after he emerged from obscurity into mature manhood, and none of these four gospel writers even pretend he ever either wrote one word, or dictated one word for them to write, during his public life, which was from his birth to his death so private and obscure as to make it impossible to verify the fact of his ever having existed at all, except the mere word of these unknown men who wrote

these gospels; much less is it possible to trace any instruction in these gospels to him, for it was all written more than a hundred years after he died, and there is no pretence that it was copied from any history or manuscript, so that it is impossible to find any authority on whom to fix with certainty, or even probability, this monstrous imposition of Christianity, for it is no relief to call or name these several writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Peter and Paul, and all the rest, for it is still a greater mystery who and what they were, and when and where they lived, for there is not the least trace of any of them anywhere to be found on earth but in this book, said to have been written by them, and what they wrote of a moral or beneficial nature was not new or original with them, for such great moralists as Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and others, left on record five hundred years before Christ had lived, conceding he ever lived at all, such precepts as the so-called "Golden Rule," and all other moral precepts contained in the four gospels, but such monstrous absurdities as are in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, as given by Matthew in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of his gospel, ought never to have been written, and attributed to Christ; for unless the whole human race always has totally disregarded nearly every precept in that sermon, the human race had never existed beyond the lowest savage, for it is manifestly impossible for modern society, or any member thereof, to even exist, that is as improvident and unconcerned about to-morrow as is the lily of the field or the fowls of the air, and if every one were to give to every one what he chose to ask of you, would very soon deprive the richest person from having anything to give, and the absurd precept to "Love your enemies" is both impossible and ridiculous. If that monstrous, outrageous, devilish word, "inspiration," had never been invented, and when invented had never been applied to the scriptures, it would never have existed at all, much less have been preserved, and transmitted down to our times, as too sacred to be examined or criticised, for it is entirely destitute of any literary merits, untruthful and contradictory in many of its statements, so capable of misconstruction, so impossible of belief in many of its statements; but, notwithstanding all this, the educated priest can take from it any phrase, however short, such as this, "Jesus wept," and enlarge upon it a whole day, and by a skillful appeal to the emotional and sympathetic nature of his listeners, can cause nearly all of them to also weep, if he also sheds a few crocodile tears; or such a text as this one, "It is appointed of all men once to die." What an eloquent appeal can be made for a suitable preparation for death, by joining our church, and get a policy of insurance on the future joys of heavenly felicity. Does it need any inspiration, or any argument, to convince any fool of such a self-evident fact,

that every living thing must die, as it is called? Yet the priest will enlarge upon such a theme till he will tire any audience, and put them to sleep.

What are the pretended Christian churches of the present day, and what have they been since the reformation? Nothing but a mere clubhouse for the wealthy people, and the minister is hired to preach such a gospel as suits the rich, or he is soon fired out. Every person who has been reared where the Christian religion is the prevailing one, is very familiar with the word "conscience," and no other form uses that word in the sense the Christian does, for it in reality is only expressive and important when men strive to heed and obey it. What then is conscience? It is one of the organs of the intellect; it is formed, altered and improved, according to the kind of education it receives, and the influences that surround and act upon each separate individual; therefore, being an organ of the mind or intellect, it becomes strengthened and refined by the education of the mind. In the condition of the savage conscience demands but very little, for it is to him only an instinct, never to be disobeyed; he therefore seldom or never does that which he has been taught to consider wrong, but to commit adultery or even incest is not wrong to him, or to eat soup made from the remains of his dead grandfather, or to kill a sickly or deformed child, or other relative, or murder any one outside of his village or tribe, is no wrong to him, but as soon as he arrives to the condition of civilized man, he has refined sentiments, and a more or less cultivated intellect, according to his environments, and in this condition scarcely a day passes in which such a man does not, more or less, violate his conscience, and impute sin to himself, when nothing but legal or imaginary sin is involved by his conduct, but this life by this imaginary violation is passed in self condemnation, because perhaps he has wasted his time and energies on an unworthy object, or in pursuit of transitory pleasure, or he has unintentionally perhaps spoken an unkind word, or even had an impure thought, but such light sins, if sins they are, do not trouble coarse men. Conscience can be instructed to consider it absolutely wicked to do that which he would not wish it to be done to himself, or to do that to a woman which he would not wish done to his own sister or wife, but the individual to whom this is done may not so regard it, but on the contrary it may be by them considered beneficial, and here we come to a singular fact. The more man is sunk in brutality the less frequently they sin against their conscience, and as men become more virtuous they become more sinful. Some men's conscience would forbid them writing as I have written, but my conscience not only approves of it, but would trouble me if I had omitted to write as I have, for I consider it to be the unquestionable

right, as it is a natural right of every man, to have and to express, either in writing or orally, on all proper occasions, such religious views and opinions as his judgment approves, without either knowing or caring whether such opinions harmonize with those who read them or hear them, or not. If, therefore, my religious opinions, written or expressed, shall be condemned without a single exception by all the readers of this book, it will not make me regret having written them, or discourage me from expressing them, if the opportunity presents itself, for it is my earnest and sincere conviction that these opinions are not only true, but also that they will tend to elevate and purify the minds of whoever receives them. I know it has done me good to write these sentiments, therefore I think it will do others good to read and cherish them, for surely they can never injure any one. I have long reflected upon these momentous subjects, and the opportunity has never before presented itself for me to have the requisite leisure to meditate and crudely formulate such imperfect observations as are contained in what I have above written; being now seventy-five years old, and incapacitated from physical labor, I have, in this evening of my days, the time before denied me, therefore, I have concluded to exercise the freedom to disclose what my long experience has taught me, both the right to think with that freedom which accumulated knowledge imparts, and what I think I have dared to put in writing, and leave for the future to adopt or reject, as to them seems best. At one period of my long life, and in fact for nearly all my adult life, I believed in the gospel narrative of the life, death, resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. Why did I believe this? Simply and only because I was instructed from unconscious infancy, childhood and mature manhood, to so believe, and many other things arising from this belief, and so connected with it as to be inseparable. After much examination and reflection I have concluded that such a Christ as the gospels delineate never has lived, and never will live, and the most that I now admit, and this is mixed with much doubt, is that there once lived, in some remote country and time, impossible of more than very weak conjecture, a young man named Jesus, a carpenter by trade, who believed that this earth belonged to the devil, and that the God of the Jews would soon take it from the devil, and govern it himself, and that he, Jesus, the Christ, or anointed, as the word signifies, was or would be appointed by God both to direct, purify and reign over the souls of men on earth, and be their judge at last. In politics he was what we now call a communist, or leveler of all distinctions of wealth or honors, in morals a mere monk, or abstainer, and therefore believed and taught that only the poor and despised would inherit the kingdom of God, and those who had riches or reputation



would go to the devil, their dethroned master, into everlasting pain, which he named hell fire at last. He violently attacked the church going Sabbatarians, the ever-praying Pharisees calling them all the vile names he could invent, and plainly declared that piety was worthless if it was praised on earth, and that all earthly happiness was a gift from Satan, and should therefore be indignantly refused. If a man was poor in this world, that was goodness, because he would be rich in the world to come, and if he were miserable and despised he ought to rejoice, for he was for that reason out of favor with Satan, the ruler of this world, and therefore in favor with the new or future dynasty, over which he was to preside; on the other hand, if a man were happy, rich, or esteemed for his generosity or virtue, he would be forever lost; he might have acquired his riches by industry, his reputation by honesty and benevolence, devotion, and obedience to moral laws; but all this did not avail, for he had already received his reward, and no more should be expected, and he also taught that all men should sell all they had and give the avails to the poor, so that all might be poor alike; and they should renounce, as he had done, all family ties, let to-morrow take care of itself, have no anxiety about any clothes or shelter, for God would take care of them, if they would fold their hands together, and have faith, and abstain wholly from making any provision for the future, and many other like absurdities with which these gospels abound. Such principles were not regarded conducive to the welfare of society, as understood by his contemporaries, and he was put to death as a disturber of the peace by the secular authority, after about a year of teaching these monstrosities, and then a few of his disciples established, by imposition and outrageous fraud, a sort of commune, which has since developed into Christianity such as we have it, only a mixture of Judaism and paganism, a fraud on the human race too disgusting and pernicious to be worth tracing through its history. The human family, if it had never been disturbed with any form or variety of religion, would have been many thousand years further along towards their ultimate destiny than they are now, but the signs of the present time indicate with some distinctness a great change in human progress, for religion is slowly dying, and science is slowly but surely assuming its proper place at the front rank in human estimation. Useful inventions have been delayed by the blighting influence of superstitious reverence, for a mere shadow, because the swarms of priests must first be supported in luxury and indolence, and listened to on account of their impudent claim of divine authority, and these have always opposed science, and denied their dupes the right to use their reason, till they have so outraged decency that a revolt has now begun that will never be allowed to diminish, but

inevitably is sure to increase. Electrical science, which the ancient world faintly observed, and it would have been developed into a perfect motive power a thousand years ago only for the influence of the church, now just begins to be revived and advanced, and no priest dare utter a word of opposition or discouragement. Steam power, which was discovered and developed by infidels, in spite of priestly opposition, has nearly had its day, and will shortly be superseded by electricity for not only a motive power, but for heat and illumination, and so do away with the cumbrous fuel of coal and oil, and its aid to aerial locomotion will in time be possible, as well as navigation on the ocean and land, and annihilate distance, and blot out all national distinctions, and the necessity of reliance upon vegetable or animal life for subsistence will disappear, by the manufacture of both flesh and flour from the natural elements, by a chemical process in the laboratory, and thus food will be produced in unlimited quantities at a trifling expense, and our enlightened posterity will look back upon us and our ancestors who eat oxen and sheep just as we now look upon cannibals; hunger and starvation will then be unknown, and the greater part of human life will no longer be wasted in the tedious process of cultivating the fields, when this time arrives population can and will mightily increase, and the earth will become a vast garden, adorned with luscious fruits and beautiful flowers; governments, as we have them now, will disappear, and the social fabric will be conducted with the quiet and regularity of club committees, and political interest will then be transferred to science, which will then be advanced to the front rank of human aspiration and endeavor, and poetry and art will take the place which religion now occupies; luxuries will be cheap and common, and poverty will disappear; man will subdue his passions, and repress the base instincts he has inherited from the animals below him, and obey the laws of nature, both physical and moral, and worship only the god within him; idleness and stupidity will be regarded with the utmost scorn and abhorrence, women will be the companions and equals with men, and the tutors and example to their children. A time will surely come when science will transform our bodies, by means which our present, limited capacities cannot conjecture, and which if explained to us clearly we could not now understand, any more than a savage mind cannot now understand steam, electricity or magnetism, as we now have them in common use; diseases will be extirpated, the causes of decay will be removed, and then the earth will be too small to contain its inhabitants, and men will migrate into space, and cross the ocean of air which separates planet from planet, and sun from sun, and man will ultimately become master of the forces of nature, the architect of systems, the manufacturer of worlds; he will

then be a creator, but even then he will be no nearer than he is at present to the first cause, the inscrutable, unapproachable mystery, which mortals for want of a more expressive word call God.

There is now no difference in kind, but only in degree, between the chemist who to-day arranges the forces in his laboratory so as to produce a gas, and the creator who arranges forces so that they produce a world, or a gardener or farmer who plants a seed, and the creator who plants a nebulæ. It is a question at this point for us to determine, whether we have or ought to have any personal or intimate relation with this supreme power, whatever we call it, whether God or natural law, and whether there is or ever will be another world in which we will be rewarded or punished as is due to our unavoidable conduct, all things taken into account. This is not only a grand problem of philosophy, but it is of all questions the most important and practical for us, and the one in which our interests are most vitally concerned, for we all have observed that at the very longest this life is short, and at the very best its pleasures are poor, for in nearly all cases before we anywhere near reach our desires, we are compelled to die.

What then, I ask, is the current or commonly received theory respecting the nature of the creator, the design of creation, and the future destiny of man, and on what is this theory founded? The principal foundation of this theory is a certain book called the Bible, or sacred book, and called sacred because a being called God is its author, or its inspirer; a secondary foundation is the priesthood, who have invented not only the book itself, but the theory or system named Theology, which asserts and endeavors to establish this proposition: The world and all it contains was made at a specified time, out of previous nothing, by this being which they name Eternal God, including man, who he created in his own image and likeness, and, therefore, God's mind is the same as that of man, but while the mind of man is found to be imperfect, troubled by passions, and stained by sin, limited in capacity, his mind is perfect power and love, both omnipotent and omnipresent; he loves men whom he has made, but sorrows over their sins, and he has placed them on earth in a state of probation or preparation, those who have sinned, including all, and those who repent of sin, including but few, he will forgive, and on them he will bestow or confer eternal felicity; all others he will punish to vindicate his justice. This reward and punishment is inflicted only on the soul, which only resides in the body in this short life, and this soul is entirely distinct from the intellect or mind, so that the soul of the most vile and degraded, and that of the greatest philosopher or poet, are equal in the sight of the creator, for he is no respecter of persons, and the value of souls are computed only by their

sins, but the sins of the ignorant will be forgiven, and the sins of the enlightened will be more severely judged and punished. What a plausible, reasonable theory theology has invented, but let us trace it out to its ultimate or full extent. The souls of idiots, not being responsible for their sins, will go to heaven, while the souls of such great and good men as Voltaire, Rosseau, Bacon, Newton, Franklin, and Lincoln, are always in danger of hell fire. All alike in infancy were poor, helpless creatures, thrust into the world by a higher force, against which they could not prevail, not capable of doing any one any harm, but yet constantly tortured by pain and privation, nourished in vice, crime and disease, is permitted to live and suffer a certain time, more or less, and then it is extinguished. It is all very comforting to those who are in this way bereaved to have the priest say it has gone to eternal bliss, but why was it not taken there direct? All this roundabout process ought to have been foreseen and avoided, and would have been by an omniscient being.

The above remarks only are intended to apply to the popular idea of the character and conduct of the creator, which asserts also that he is endowed with a mind or intellect. This is most vehemently denied for the following reasons. The conduct of an earthly father towards his child sometimes appears to others to be cruel, when in reality it is not cruel, because he does it for the good of the child; but a parent is neither omnipotent or omniscient, so he is obliged to choose between two evils; but the creator is both, and he therefore chooses cruelty as a means of education or development; he has a preference for cruelty, or he would not use it; he is therefore fond of cruelty or he would not prefer it; he therefore is cruel, which is absurd. Again, sin entered the world against the will of the creator, in which case he is not omnipotent; or it entered with his permission, in which case it is his agent, in which case he has selected sin, in which case he is fond of sin, in which case he is sinful, which is a greater absurdity. But it is when we open the book of nature, that book inscribed in tears, and blood, and intense suffering of all imaginable kinds and degrees, that we plainly see how untrue and deceptive is the theory of the theologian, that the God of the Bible is love, for in all things there is cruel misery and profligate waste of all the animals that are born, a few only survive till mature, and not only is there waste in human life, but the same waste is found in moral life, the instinct of filial love is planted in the human constitution, and that which to some is a solace is to others a torture; how many muse on the days that might have been, and how many eyes, when they read these words, will be filled with tears; how brief is delight, and how long are our pains; our joys soon grow into regrets, and our happiness is only



a dream, which we only realize when it is past. Is pain, grief, disease and death, then, only the best invention of a living God? That no animal shall rise to supreme excellence except by being fatal to the lives of others—is this the law of a kind creator? No! by no means. What, then, are we to infer? Only that the current theory, or theology, is false, and that all attempts to define the creator are only ridiculous, farcical conclusions, for the supreme power is not a mind, but something we know not what, that is higher or beyond a mind; not a force, but something more than force; not a being, but something superior to a being, and a something for which we at present, nor any that have preceded us, can have words suitable to express so sublime an idea, scarcely within the scope of the most active imagination, but which will be plain to the future man, when his capacity is enlarged to comprehend it; but the past and present man is as far removed from the power to fathom this mystery as the worm or beetle is removed from the ability to comprehend man, and it therefore follows that man is not made in the image of God, or in his likeness, and that leads us to the following conclusions: Supernatural Christianity, which is the kind we have, is false; God worship is pagan idolatry; prayer is nothing but a useless mockery; The soul is not immortal; There are no rewards and no punishments in a future state, for there is no future state. The origin of either good or evil can never be explained, but must always, as far as we can see, remain a mystery, and all attempts to explain one or the other only mystify it more deeply, because the profoundest thinker is a mere worm, crawling for a day over the surface of a speck of matter, named to distinguish it from other specks, “earth,” and the most profound religion is nothing but a mere phantom, or superstition, that ought to be destroyed, and forever banished, from human remembrance, for what is the question? It is not whether any form of religion assisted the civilization of our ancestors, but is it assisting those now on the stage of life?

I, for my part, consider it a duty to set free from its chains as many as I can, for upon this point my conscience, or, if you please, my conceptions of duty, speaks distinctly, and shall be obeyed. In all my assaults on Christianity I use the clearest language I can command. Ridicule is a destructive weapon, and I intend to destroy and tear up by the roots as much imposition and fraud as I can. Christianity must be destroyed, because the world has outgrown that religion, and is now in the condition of the Roman empire in pagan days, a cold-hearted infidelity in the higher ranks, and sordid superstition in the lower, and an endeavor on the part of the priests to reconcile the fables of a barbarous people with the facts of science and the lofty conceptions of phil-

osophy. Youths enter the church before their minds are formed, discover when it is too late what it is they adore, and since these priests cannot tell the truth, and let their wives and children starve, they are forced to lead a life which is only a lie. What a state of society is this, in which a free thinker is a term of abuse, and when doubt is a sin. Churches are mere apparel shows, and genteel recreation. Theology is progressive, adapting itself to changes, and modifying its harsh, untruthful dogmas by councils wherein debate, strife and violence yields to a majority, so that the worship of a ghost or myth is succeeded by a pagan deity in many parts, and that finally to one God, and in this process a curious fact is revealed. Those who seek to overthrow any established system always attack its founders, and show their method unsound, and their reasoning weak, and their experiments futile, and yet the men who create a revolution are made in the likeness of those they seek to subvert. In the same manner we who in this age assail the Christian's faith are the true successors of the early Christians, above whom we are raised by the progress of eighteen hundred years. As they preached against Gods that were made of stone, or other base material, so we preach against Gods that are made of ideas. As they were called atheists and blasphemers, so are we; but we have not the stimulants to offer which they had, we cannot threaten as they did that the world is about to be destroyed; we cannot bribe our converts with the false promise of a heaven; we cannot make them tremble with the fear of a hell. A faith such as that of the stoics and Sadducees can only be embraced by cultivated minds, and culture in their days was confined to a select few, but now knowledge, freedom and prosperity are fast covering the earth; for three centuries past human virtue has been steadily increasing, and mankind are fast becoming prepared to receive a higher faith; but in order to build we must first destroy; not only the Syrian superstition, called the Bible, must be attacked, but also the belief in a personal God, which can only engender an oriental slavish condition of the mind; therefore, these unfounded, untruthful beliefs are injurious to human nature, for they lower its dignity, they arrest its development, they isolate its affections. There sometimes appear to be some beautiful sentiments mingled with a faith in a personal God, and horrible ones in a belief in a personal devil, so one balances the other, but however refined these sentiments may appear they are selfish at the core, and if they can be removed they may be replaced by those of a purer kind; they cannot be removed without some disturbance and distress, yet the sorrows are mostly imaginary, and finally will be salutary and sublime. In each preceding generation the human race has been tortured, that their successors might profit by their woes, and our own

prosperity, such as it is, is founded on the agonies of the past. Is it therefore unjust that we should suffer for the benefit of those who are to come after us? Famine, pestilence and war are no longer essential to the advancement of the human race, but all signs indicate that a season of mental anguish and disturbance is in the near future, and through this we must pass in order that our posterity may get the benefit of our trials. The soul, as relates to its salvation through any atonement, must be sacrificed, and all hope of immortality must die; a sweet and charming illusion must be taken from the human race, in the same sense that youth and beauty vanish after a time, when their purpose is served, never to return, so our hopes are only chimerical, and our fears groundless. "Amen."

At the bottom of the last paragraph I wrote the word "Amen," which is commonly held to signify the termination or close of any subject, but such signification is erroneous, for the word only means "so be it." I, therefore, shall continue to write, in addition to the preceding, such new thoughts as may arise, as long as my physical and mental ability is continued to me. I have written some thoughts about some gods, and I propose to write some more, that may explain more definitely some indistinct observations before made. When we consider how men came to have such firm beliefs in some things about which they never have so much as inquired, it will not seem so very strange that they are so firmly fixed that much direct and strong proof is required to dislodge them; but however strange it may seem, it is that which every day's experience confirms, and is not so very wonderful, if we consider the way it has been secured by the priests, for it is they alone who are at the root of all superstition, and it is to their advantage, as much as in them lies, to nourish and perpetuate it. The belief in a God, or many Gods, is transmitted from the priest to the parent or nurse, or some old woman, who is too ignorant to be able to do more than, parrot like, repeat to the feeble intellect of the child that so and so, including all observed phenomena, is the act of God, who sees and knows everything, and finally, by length of time and the concurrence of the community in which the child is born and reared to maturity, such instruction grows up to the dignity of a positive principle, for a child's mind is as blank and susceptible to impressions as white paper is, so that it takes any impression that comes first to its feeble comprehension, and as the mind grows and expands with the body, such first impressions are confirmed to them, both by the open and declared profession and the tacit consent of those they come in contact with in society, or at least by those whose wisdom, knowledge and pretended piety are an example to them, and who never suffer these superstitious propositions to be other-

wise mentioned but as the foundation on which they build their religion and conduct, and by such means, when they arrive at maturity, they have the force of unquestionable truth, and by such a process they become incapacitated to reflect, for they cannot find any belief more ancient, and these opinions were taught them before their memory began to keep a register of their actions, and therefore they scruple not to conclude that those propositions, of whose knowledge they can find in themselves no original, were most certainly the impress of God upon their minds, and were not taught them by any one else, and these they afterwards entertain, cultivate and submit to, as they do to their parents, with veneration little short of sanctity, not for the same reason, it is true, but because, having been so educated and having no remembrance of any beginning of these impressions, they conclude them innate or natural, having in most cases no time or disposition, for lack of facilities to examine, there is scarcely any in any community to be found who are not content from their ignorance or indifference to take any false teachings on trust. And another reason is, who is there so bold or so hardy as to dare to contend with the scorn and reproach that is everywhere, by the connivance and direction of the priests, prepared for those who dare venture to dissent from the received opinions in religious matters from their own country or party, and scarcely a man can be found in any generation or country who can patiently prepare himself to bear the hateful name of infidel, which includes all forms of skepticism and even atheism, as every one is sure to who does in the least differ from those common opinions, and he will be much more afraid to question the commonly received opinions about religion, when he shall regard them, as most men do, whether pious or not, the standards set up by God in his mind, to be the guide of his conduct as well as his opinions, and what can hinder him from thinking them sacred when he finds that they are the earliest of all his own thoughts on religion, and also the most revered by his associates. It is in this way that all idolatry has been introduced, and has been afterwards nourished, propagated and perpetuated, as well as Judaism or Christianity. If you can find any savage so degraded he has no priest, or what is his equivalent, you will find there a people who have no more idea of any God that an infant has at birth, and until there has been enough experience to produce a specimen of their tribe above the average intelligence, smart enough to comprehend any observed phenomenon, such as sunrise, day and night, winter and summer, heat and cold, and others like them, and seek for a cause, he can only assume a cause, and that is as far as the most gifted mortal that has ever lived has been able to go, but whether such assumption is false or not, such an individual will rise

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to the dignity of a priest, for he is, by reason of such discovery, or assumption, competent for the time to instruct his associates, and, as far as the human family has yet advanced, assumption includes all that is known about God, Devil, Heaven, Hell, or any future life, and it is all mankind ever will or can know.

This is all I care to say at present about God, but I will make some observations about the worship of God. The most costly and beautiful temples, devoted in the various countries and forms of religion, to the worship of God, are all the product of robbery, perpetrated by the various grades of priests of every such form of religion. It always has been mournful and sad to see a whole people oppressed and deceived in the name of a foolish, useless religion. All these immense treasures have been extorted, drop by drop, from the credulity of the poor and the ignorant, and are the source and principal cause of all the poverty of the masses of mankind, so that the priests of all grades, from the pope down to the most beastly monk, may be pampered in luxury, simply and only for the reason that they profess and so announce to be the mediators between man and some imaginary deity. These poor peasant wretches, for all these priests care, may perish by starvation on the floors of the most costly mosaic which his own miserable pittance, wrung from him by fraud and deception, has helped to create the means to form, while ceilings and shrines of inlaid gold and the most precious gems, mock his dying eye with useless splendor. These various systems of fraud and imposture can only be sustained by the perpetuation of ignorance and superstition, and that furnishes the reason why the priests of all religions, oppose science, for knowledge, truth and reason must be crushed, because if they all, or even either, prevail, imposture and fraud will vanish, and men universally can only be esteemed for their character instead of their opinions, and all men who travel much find as much or more of brotherly kindness among the heathen barbarians as among the most holy Christians. Much boasting has always been indulged in by Protestant Christian missionaries, claiming that Christianity alone, without other assistance, has elevated and refined all classes of savages in all countries which have had the Christians' Bible introduced among them, and the priests of the particular sect which sent the missionary among them, to instruct them in its precepts, continually make exaggerated reports, so as to encourage further donations of money, to enlarge and continue that particular successful enterprise. None of these reports are entitled to any notice, and are for the greater part not merely exaggerations, but absolute lies, or, what is no better, refusing to give the "Other Side" a hearing. This other side is given by sea captains, sailors and other travelers, and is more than an offset to the

former highly colored side. A gentleman from Boston, a graduate from Cambridge University, who visited California in 1836, and on his way there visited the South Pacific and Sandwich Islands, came in contact there with the natives, and also with those on the Pacific coast, writes thus: "It has been said that the greatest curse to each and all of these South Sea Islands was the first white man who discovered it, and every one who knows anything of the history of our commerce in those islands knows that that statement is a true one; for it is an acknowledged fact that white men with their vices have brought in habits and diseases before unknown to the islands, which are now sweeping off the natives of the Sandwich Islands at the rate of one-fortieth of the whole annually, and the curse of a people calling themselves Christians seems to follow them everywhere they go. The one vice of intemperance is more than an offset to any benefit they ever can get from the missionaries, but that is one of the least of the vices in all Christian lands. The enormous vice of female prostitution was never heard of before the white man introduced and practiced it there, and the same can with truth be said of profane swearing, gambling, opium eating, and many other forms of Christian vice, such as lying, cheating, murder and robbery. These have all followed the missionary, and more than neutralized all his boasted good. Besides, why should men of one way of thinking wish or be allowed to disturb other men who have always been instructed in a very different way than their own, or how dare one set of men intrude unasked and undesired upon the long established customs of other men, and offer them some substitute for that form of religious belief which they try to persuade them to renounce, when they know that such renunciation and acceptance inevitably makes of this person a social outcast, and results in no benefit to offset such a sacrifice of former convictions. Every missionary is, by reason of his previous course of preparation to qualify him to aspire to the position of a missionary, unfit to understand or comprehend what is the condition of mankind, either in a state of nature or in the savage state, or any grade of barbarism above those states and below his own, therefore he can form no intelligent idea of the simple delights of an uncultivated life, which in all cases are commensurate with his capacities of enjoyment, and it is in forgetting or else in disregarding this important fact that misleads all those who pretend to have so much solicitude for the temporal and eternal welfare of other men, about whom no solicitude is required, for a savage state of society is not necessarily a miserable state, neither is civilization of any grade able alone to impart contentment and prosperity or unmixed happiness, for the enlarged capacity of these cultivated people require a like increase of pleasure to meet such enlarged capacity of enjoyment.

Mankind, the world over in all times, are what nature and his opportunities or surroundings have made him, and such he will always continue to be. To all profound thinkers and moralists it is a serious undecided question whether the state or condition of the savage, all things taken into the account, is not preferable to that of the civilized peasant, meaning one who is by that condition compelled to the incessant drudgery of severe labor, and denied every opportunity of improvement or recreation. The savage has no prison and want of money to fear, no oppressive, tyrannical lord and master to serve, he is not debased by daily seeing many persons above him in riches or honor, he is without superior and without servitude, more healthy, vigorous and happy than the peasant, enjoys the inestimable satisfaction of liberty and equality so vainly boasted by civilized nations, and instead of being preyed upon and robbed by Christians, under the false pretence of civilizing them, they ought to be protected from their cupidity and avarice, which is their only motive by which they are stimulated, when they falsely pretend, as an excuse for meddling in their affairs, is a desire to civilize and Christianize them by giving them a form of religion in no sense superior for them than the one they have. All Christian missionaries are vain and full of deceit and contempt, and fearfully unjust when they are remote and in no fear of being detected. These men, and those that send them out, vainly imagine that on this globe there is no part of it, no nation, no province, no city and no society as refining and elevating as our Presbyterian or our Methodist, Baptist, and what not, is, and so they get a secret persuasion that they alone are the first persons in the universe, when they really are of no more consequence than so many oysters. Who among theologians ever made any useful discoveries in the arts or sciences? None of their brains or hands ever formed a plan or map of the heavens or the earth, or ever built ships, or palaces, or invented any labor saving machine, or dictated laws or benefitted society in any way, and yet these theologians will boldly come forward, with the most contemptible impudence, and claim to have done all that ever has been done to civilize and educate humanity. I say, No! Science and philosophy have polished and civilized mankind, not only without any aid from the theologian, but in spite of his opposition. If they had been assisted, instead of being hindered by the latter, or even if these had remained neutral, society would have been many thousand years further advanced than it now is, but it yet is and always has been both the policy and the practice of the priests of all forms of religion to keep the masses in stupidity and blindness, and to persecute and remove out of their way by assassination all those they suspect may open the eyes of their dupes. All great men in science and philosophy have one after

another been reviled, persecuted and oppressed beyond endurance, and all their writings destroyed, unless placed beyond their reach, for the reason that the priests feared that more or less light might be perceived by their dupes, and so in time ignorance and darkness would disappear. Such great men at Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Voltaire, and others like them, have been and now are held up to scorn and ridicule by these contemptible, insignificant religious villians, throughout the whole period of Christian history, and the reverse of these men in ability, mere noodles in comparison, all have been eulogized and venerated, sanctified and revered, to the point of disgust. I say they have had their day. Away with them, for they are nothing but poltroons and bigots, fanatics and pedants, enamored by false ideas, for nothing is more dangerous to the state than these senseless moral disclaimers, who have concentrated all their small minds on one idea, they continually repeat what they heard in their infancy from their nurses, incessantly urging moderation in our desires and universal extinction of our passions, not perceiving that their precepts carried out to their ultimate result would prove the ruin of any nation that could be persuaded to adopt them, however useful some of them might prove in individual and exceptional cases. These narrow minded bigots have got and have always had possession of the floor, or what is equivalent, the public ear and confidence, and allow no meddling or criticism; their strong weapons are fraud and detraction, and at the same time cultivate and encourage credulity, because it is compatible with ignorance. They teach that to examine an absurdity is labor, therefore you must believe us without investigation or question. When such a disposition is secured, as it always is, the most convincing proof of the falsity of any opinion advanced by the priests will never have any weight and any dream of such priests will be more convincing than reality itself, and this is the frame of mind the priests always cultivate in the child, the adult, the mature man. What a tremendous force is credulity in any religion, for there has never been a time or a people when a monarch, be he King, Emperor or Queen, did not seek to shelter themselves from all insult or danger from their subjects' wrath by acting in concert and subordination to the priesthood, who were able to raise about their throne phantoms of superstition and terror to such an extent that the priest became master in all but the name; no obstacle was allowed to diminish their influence and power. The tyranny of the Egyptian priests was terrible, for the sovereigns were all encircled from their infancy with the bondage of opinion, for if they had been allowed the liberty of investigation they would have discovered that these priests were nothing but cheats and mercenary enthusiasts, but instead of that,



by this process, the sovereigns, when mature, became their slaves and victims, and the people, of course, followed their example, and easily became mere slaves and victims of the priests and king, and in this way all Egypt fell prostrate at the feet of the pontiff, and superstition, and such has been the condition of all humanity, in all time and all lands, and will continue to be as long as superstition and ignorance can be made to thrive at the continued and persistent demand of the priests.

The American Indians are better known, in reference to their religious and other peculiarities than any other savage tribes in foreign lands, and of course they are divided into many tribes or separate communities, but notwithstanding this fact they are essentially the same in their religious belief. They have no priests, as we understand that term, but the one who represents such an office to them is their medicine man. These belong to no order separate from the others, but include only such as have become famous for their success in curing maladies and discovering suitable remedies and nostrums to relieve pain and heal wounds and such like accomplishments. These are reinforced from time to time, as death causes vacancies, and the initiation of a new member is done in a general dance called the medicine dance. These new members are selected by reason of their superior or natural endowments in the line of medicine, and are supposed to have such on account of some favor shown them by the Great Spirit. When fully initiated, and after sufficient practice has demonstrated his abilities to entitle him to this honor, they become in a certain sense both priest and prophet, but not in a sense we give to those words, because a priest never attempts to do more than relieve or cure bodily diseases, and a prophet never does more than try to instruct or restrain the vicious. None of the tribes in their aboriginal state have more than a vague, indistinct notion of any future life, and what they have is the result of dreams, for they reason that the sleep of the body, being similar to death, while it lasts and as in that sleep there is conscious activity of the mental faculty, so in the final sleep of death the soul continues alive and active in the same pursuits that were common to the body when they were in unison. They get these interpretations from the medicine men, consequently they have no hope of reward or fear of retribution, nothing but a faint hope of a continuation of such conditions as are had in this life, so that they have and universally exercise a strong appreciation of the great fundamental virtues of a natural religion. The adoration of the Great Spirit, brotherly love, parental and filial affection, honesty, temperance and chastity carried to extremes, because they are taught that any infringement of these cardinal virtues will draw down punishment in this life, because they will thus incur the anger of the Great Spirit. Such is a brief outline of the

aborigines of America, but this outline has become seriously disturbed and marred by the contact they have been compelled to have with white Christian missionaries and others, for those who know their present condition best, because they have lived among them many years, uniformly certify that such vices as lying, stealing, cheating, intemperance, gambling and female prostitution, before unknown among them, are now fearfully prevalent, so that if in some directions improvement can be shown, in others a like or greater degradation is more than an offset to such improvement. It is easy enough to put on and habitually wear a long, solemn face, make long prayers, eat sacramental bread and drink sacramental wine, in the name of a crucified Saviour, for this is all done by the most damnable robbers and oppressors the world has ever contained, for thousands of these men in times past have fattened on the unpaid toil of the outcast and imbruted slaves, and have sold them by the millions on the auction block, to raise the money to not only support the gospel at home, but to send swarms of missionaries to foreign lands to try and convert a few foreign heathen, encompassing both sea and land to make a few proselytes, and making them by such a process a thousand fold more the children of hell than they were in a natural state, by teaching them the vices which fester and thrive unopposed in all Christian lands. Outwardly, in this country, by the death of slavery, by the most bloody and sanguinary war the world has ever known in modern times, some of these odious practices have been abolished, but the quality and animus of the former slave holder is yet as it always was, which is the right and duty for the strong to oppress and trample upon the weak. The Christianity of the former slave holders now means the same as it always did, which was and is the right to appropriate by one man, the strongest of the two, the faculties and labors of another man to his own use, and to pass and enforce laws that reduce him to the level of the brute, to deny him education or any domestic or social relations, and although they cannot now sell him into slavery, and separate families, they can and do universally rob him of every, political right and degrade him by enacting and enforcing laws that discourage him from ever aspiring to that degree of mental ability to realize what true freedom is.

In all the abominable, outrageous charges that has been made in what has before been written in this book, nothing has yet been revealed in reference to the attitude of the Christianity of American churches towards negro slavery, in comparison to what has been written in reference to the inquisition, or holy office, as it is connected with Christianity. Nothing is any more horrible, or more in conflict with a true appreciation of what any form of religion that professes to elevate

and civilize humanity is, but applies with equal or greater force to the church in its connection and defence of American slavery, while it existed, or before the war of 1861, consequently a dark, horrible page is yet to be unfolded, for they have for two hundred and fifty years literally broken not only the bond man and woman's skin and bones, but also their hearts, to get not only sacramental but all other bread, and poured out his blood to buy sacramental and other wine. The conversion of the heathen to such a religion, or any other person, instead of indicating any progress in the cause of justice, freedom or civilization, or furnishing any cause of congratulation, is only a sure sign of moral degeneracy, ecclesiastical blindness and Pharisaical malignity. It has insinuated itself into the heart's blood of the whole Christian church, North as well as South, and it also has diffused its poisonous, disorganizing leaven through all the great institutions of benevolence, and constantly gags and intimidates the few pulpits whose ministers had the courage to speak a few seasonable words for freedom. In their prayer meetings they never dared to allude in the most distant manner to the subject of slavery, because they pretended they never heard of such a thing as oppression in this free land, but they did hear a great deal about it in all missionary reports from the South Sea Islands, Africa, India, and other distant heathen regions, but not in Christian America. It is easy for the hypocrites to preach and pray about idolatry, persecution and distress among the heathen of the old world, and sing about breaking chains of error in such absurd foolish hymns as this, "From Greenland's icy mountains, \* \* \* they call us to deliver their land from error's chain," and all such like fol de rol, when all they do is to fasten on them a more horrible superstition in exchange for the one they seek to break and remove, as well as monstrous vices before unknown.

The tricks and deceptions of the priests in all varieties of religion are directly calculated to fill the minds of all sensible non-religious men with the most unutterable disgust and indignation, for their only value or utility to those who invent these pretended miracles is to fill the ignorant, indolent and indifferent masses with supreme awe and reverence for a reality, or seeming one, that does not exist. History is full of these disclosures of fraud and villany. At one of the great battles of Napoleon in Italy, that of Arsona, fought on the 10th of February, 1797, the image of wood or stone of the Virgin Mary, carried at the head of the column of the army of the pope, when she saw that the French were victorious, shed tears in the sight of the defeated and victorious Catholic soldiers, and when after the defeat this image was captured and examined it was discovered that these imitation tears were only a string of glass beads, so arranged as to be moved by clock work in the head of the image.

This incident is only one of multitudes of the like nature, and is referred to in this place to show that suspicion is justifiable when any unnatural scene is enacted, calculated to impress the ignorant and superstitious multitude with fear and reverence for the sacredness of the holy office of the priests. Such mummeries as these have in all past time been the reliance of the priesthood of Christianity, at least to fortify and perpetuate fraud, superstition and imposture, while such great men as Bonaparte, rising above, encouraging or assisting these mummeries, occupied his great talents in overthrowing these obstacles to human progress, and liberating the people from the odious tyranny and oppression of the pope, by, in a large degree, limiting his power and exposing his hypocrisy, and as soon as the struggles of the war necessary to secure these results enabled him to employ his armies for such a beneficent purpose, he projected and built permanent roads through every part of France and Italy, also extensive canals and bridges, dry docks, harbors, hospitals and institutions of learning, art and science. All these important things had been for a thousand years entirely suspended or neglected in all Europe, as the result of the triumph of Christianity over paganism, as it existed at Rome, and would never have been revived if the power of the church had not thus been weakened, and compelled to obey superior physical force. Without doubt, religion is a principle so firmly fixed and fortified in the heart of man, that it will be next to impossible to remove it or perceptibly weaken it, but many reasons can be urged in favor of the continuation of the present system of organized Christian congregations, for it must not be supposed that all or even a majority of pew holders, and thus sustainers of Christian worship, are church members, for if only church members supported the church organizations they would very speedily die for want of means to keep them alive, and to erect their costly houses of worship, for it is considered essential to decorate and beautify internally church edifices so as to make them attractive, to secure the patronage of the rich, who are the chief dependence, however irreligious they may be. These indifferent persons only go to church for social and for business reasons, but still they constitute the main reliance in all churches, for the financial and business energy to keep them alive. There is therefore to this class of persons no greater bore than to be compelled, by simply going there to be amused, to be obliged to listen to long, uninteresting sermons, for no one but a preaching minister has the impudence to compel an audience to sit still for an hour or more and be tormented with his absurd platitudes and untruths, so monstrous as to need to be answered on the spot by interruptions, and thus be compelled to yield a seeming assent to whatever such minister chooses to put before him, merely because he is supposed



to be too sacred and learned to admit of doubt as to his sincerity or honesty, when in most cases the minister is filled with vanity to hear his own voice, and his sermon is the most delicate and refreshing morsel of his whole life, and his chief means of self-exaltation.

Nothing is more distinctly manifest to the attentive observers of current events in the religious world than the confident boasting of their priests and theologians of every degree of authority, as to the security and permanence of Christianity. This is paraded and emphasized by these bigots on every public occasion, both by oral speech and in their printed documents, such as magazines and religious newspapers, and such boasts are commonly accompanied by sneers and taunts at the puny efforts of the few insignificant skeptics who endeavor to attack and hope to finally weaken and destroy Christianity. Such a state of things finds its parallel or counterpart in the impregnable security some nations pretend to feel, and to boast of, when they have strongly fortified all the approaches to their sea coast, and have erected strong forts and castles at every assailable point about their capitol in the interior, organized a strong army and navy to protect their inhabitants and commerce; but, notwithstanding all these preparations and precautions, many nations have been overwhelmed and destroyed by some so considered inferior nation, in ancient times and in our own times; the strongest fortifications known to history, Sebastopol and Gibraltar, have been assailed and taken by assault, and either destroyed by the conqueror or strengthened and defended so as to defy any future attacking force. A similar condition has been many times met with in the history of the Christian church, which, after its security and supposed unassailable perpetuity had been established, as its founders fondly hoped or dreamed, when it had so far triumphed over the pagan systems with which it had struggled for more than three hundred years, so as to in turn become the masters and persecutors, and get a head or pope in the person of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, who was the most dastardly murderer and tyrant the world has ever known, and from that time gradually established all inferior grades of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and power, and organize and consolidate priestly power and influence, whose object and result was to brutalize and degrade the masses, and while appropriating to themselves and concentrating in themselves all the learning in theological speculations attainable, and at the same time making it impossible for the masses to be other than a superstitious and ignorant rabble, so that, having the strong arm of the civil power to rely on, they could and did defy any and all interference, and for more than a thousand years no serious outside interference was possible, or was had, to cause any apprehension of weakness, much less of destruc-

tion, till the time of the reformation begun by Luther in the seventeenth century; and that movement merely operated to divide, but not materially weaken, Christianity as a whole, and in some respects it, in its final results, rather strengthened Christianity, and only weakened Romanism or popery, and that was further weakened by internal divisions and strife, till in the present century it got its death blow, from which it never can recover, when Napoleon Bonaparte, on the seventh day of May, 1809, decreed the temporal power of the pope ended; and for that decree Bonaparte was excommunicated from the church in a written document called a "bull," which act caused Bonaparte to seize the pope and carry him a prisoner to Paris, and hold him a prisoner more than three years, and would have forever prevented him or any person in his name, or by the authority of the Roman Catholic church, from ever receiving his title or his authority as head of the church, if combined Europe had not released him and destroyed his master, but that death of popery at that time begun, and he has been gradually sinking, as the king of Italy by the assistance of Garibaldi has taken from the pope all the states of the church in Italy, over which till that time the pope had a show of civil power by courtesy or mere politeness, but in 1832 the pope was compelled to vacate these states, and relinquish every remnant of his temporal power in Rome itself, and consent to be a mere prisoner in the palace of the Vatican till such times as the king of Italy or his successor decides to himself enter into full possession, which will undoubtedly be when the present pope, Leo thirteenth, dies, and the next pope, if it is possible to elect another, which some doubt, will have to choose some other country than Italy to dwell in, and as no country in Europe is available, he must reside in free America; and here he can be only tolerated as long as he minds his own business, and refrains from meddling with political or secular affairs. Now all these and many more interruptions have disturbed in the past the tranquility and interfered with the determination of the church to get and keep universal dominion, not only over the souls but over the bodies and all possessions of the whole human race, for that has always been the ambition and the cause of all missionary efforts, to extend and establish Christianity all over the world, and by hypocritically pretending all the time that these movements had the laudable object to convert and save the souls of men.

What a disgraceful burlesque the history of the popes furnish, of which the masses of men are and always have been ignorant. Everybody must admit that for any important movement to succeed, perfect unity and harmony is imperative, especially among the head managers,

who claims divine right and trace their right back to Christ himself. But how has it been with this vile nest of popes, who have or pretend to have succeeded each other back to St. Peter himself, who was appointed pope by Jesus Christ, when he gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and told him that he was the rock on which he proposed to erect his church. A reference to history discloses that at one period the church had no pope for a considerable period, at another time they were cursed with a female pope, whose sex was only discovered when she clothed in male attire, and on horseback gave birth to a male infant; at another time there were three popes, each claiming to be genuine, and these rival claims had to be determined by the secular arm or civil laws. At another time the pope had to flee to Avignon, in France, to avoid the fury of his Roman subjects for many years, till a change in civil rulers restored him again to his Roman home; and besides all these disturbances and interruptions of peace and harmony, endless doctrinal contentions and divisions, requiring universal councils to harmonize some disputes, and secure conformity and obedience among inferior orders of priests, and finally the entire irrecoverable loss of all temporal power and possessions, when the king of Italy decides to enter into possession of the Vatican, makes the prospect of extending this vile system over the whole earth look very discouraging; for when you consider the increase of population now on earth, Christianity, instead of gaining anything, is gradually but surely losing, both in number and power, but in order to deceive the people as to numbers, they, in their returns, include the whole population in Christian lands, men, women and children, instead of actual communicants, thus gaining more than one-half, and among pagans they count as many as necessary to make it seem worth while to continue to proselyte in that country. In all highly civilized and enlightened countries, like Germany, France, England, and the United States of America, where ignorance is on the decrease, and consequently intelligence is on the increase, science has progressed far enough in some directions, such as geology, botany, astronomy, and some others, to demonstrate that theology is not only no science, as its votaries claim it is, but instead it is absolutely false in all its fundamental principles, and that fact permits skepticism to assail theology and divide into many sects and branches all Protestant Christians, who, instead of being an aid to advance the general cause, are nothing but a hinderance, for their dissensions and divisions promote antagonism among the leaders, and confusion among the masses, and both encourages and causes skepticism, doubt and distrust, and finally ends in causing these conflicting sects to pull apart and destroy each other, encouraging by this division the various forms of infidelity to thrive, and attack this divided Christ-

ian army at many weak points. When a skillful military commander, in encountering an enemy in war, finds such enemy strongly fortified and guarded by an army more numerous and better equipped than his own, rather than expose his own army to destruction by a direct attack, he chooses to destroy his enemy by stratagem, and while making a bold demonstration and a seeming purpose to risk an encounter on the open field, he secretly employs a force of sappers and miners to excavate a suitable approach, and deposit such a quantity of explosives under the fort he is assailing, as to cause its sudden destruction, together with all the force of men and materials within it, and all such warfare is considered by the laws of all nations legitimate, and is used by both contending forces when circumstances favor such use, and results in a grand victory by an inferior force when defeat would have been sure if a battle had been openly fought. One of the strongest forts of Christianity, and perhaps the strongest, is the Bible, for all the minor or inferior strongholds have originated and been constructed out of the material extracted from its pages. That supposed unassailable fortress has had undisputed possession of the Jewish and Christian civilization ever since it had a being, till within perhaps the last one hundred years, because of its alleged divine origin and its mysterious disclosures, and hence nobody was critical enough to try to find any error in the Bible, and when found was bold enough to announce and point out such discovery, and all commentators were allowed unopposed to interpret and harmonize its conflicting statements as to himself, or to those who employed him to do this work, seemed best suited to accomplish the end sought to be established, and that was in all cases to remove every doubt, if any existed, and to prevent all doubt, if any was expected, as to its absolute divine origin, its exact truth and its permanent continuance as long as time lasts, and the impossibility of ever discovering any flaw or error in either its statements or its conclusions. This state of things is rapidly disappearing, and the chief business of theologians of the present is to be both active and earnest in its defence. Skepticism, like orthodoxy, is divided into many forms, and is consequently not able to meet orthodoxy in open warfare, because, however much they differ on non-essentials, as they modestly call these sectarian disputes, they are all united to defend the main fortification, for on their success in doing that their whole existence depends; but while no open, direct attack, in the open field of controversy, is considered the best generalship, the sappers and miners are all the while at work, and when the mine is ready the explosion will come and the rotten fabric will be consigned to its proper place, to inculcate morality, if any can be extracted from it, and cease to cultivate superstition, fraud and deception.



When we consider the manner in which the Bible of the Jew was produced, and the immense sums of money which have been spent since it emerged from the manuscript or written form in which the Jews preserved their history and recorded their laws, and has since passed into the printed form, as soon as the art of printing by movable types was invented, there can be no mystery that it still exists, but in its present form it is sadly mutilated. There is no risk of exaggeration when we assert that more copies of the Bible have been printed and sold for more money than is true of any thousand other books in their numerous editions that can be named, to say nothing of the unnumbered thousands that have been given away. Unlike every other book, whose author retained its copyright and controlled its sale, there never was any copyright on the Bible, so that as many publishers as chose to could publish and sell the Bible, illustrated or not; no person, not a Jew priest, has or ever had an original manuscript copy of the Hebrew old testament, and they therefore claim with much justice that no Bible but the Hebrew one is genuine, and they assert that no Christian has any more right to its use, to mix it with their new testament, than they have to use the Koran of Mahomet or any other sacred book of antiquity, and more especially to translate it into Greek, English or any other language, for the reason that such translation is impossible without destroying any claim to inspiration or revelation, which the Christian asserts it now has; and no such claim was ever set up by the Jews, therefore the claim of inspiration is without any force. As has before been shown, no translation from one language to another is possible, so as to accurately convey the meaning of the first author, and the pretension of the Christian theologian that God has superintended the various translations and revisions, so that no error or ambiguity is possible, has no force, for the work itself is full of error and contradiction, which only requires very superficial examination to reveal; and what must be its condition when it is put into the various languages that are reached by the missionaries, who themselves in many cases invent a language, and instruct the savage, who is entirely destitute of any mind to comprehend the want of language, and then advance him so that finally he can read what the missionary puts before him, and he puts before him a Bible of his own invention, and who is able to detect such an imposition? And this whole missionary farce is a monstrous injustice, and the great wonder is that they are not all exterminated, and they soon would be if they were not protected by the civil laws or treaties between commercial nations. What a monstrous absurdity that we, who live in this land of liberty, in the close of the 19th century, should still consent to be bound to consider the old testament inspired of God! It was written about four

thousand years ago, and is allegory, mythology, history and prophecy, poetry and proverbs, by a set of men who were but half civilized, and knew nothing of science or art.

Many persons, including some of my own family, have and still do regard me and my writings with a sort of curiosity bordering on contempt, simply because, after an active, laborious life, reaching the advanced age of seventy-five years, and being myself conscious of a waning of my vital energies, I chose to retire from active business, and devote a large portion of my remaining time and strength to intellectual pursuits, and to such amusements and social enjoyments as I could find, as a partial recompense of having till now been denied these opportunities, and to spend much time in serious reflections upon the great problem of the ends and aims of man's existence; and I have often felt, when writing these imperfect thoughts, to lament the small ability I have, to use suitable sarcastic language to convey my unutterable scorn and contemptible hate of such a vile nest of despoilers of the truths of science as the priests are, and wished I could deal them a blow whose echo should reach posterity, and warn the world after the hand that wrote it was crumbled into dust; for age, by its destructive mandate, will soon consign this feeble frame to oblivion, and very likely what he has written also; for if any class of mortals must be isolated, or avoided, for giving free utterance or writing what he considers truth, but the others are just as certain is only error, it ought to be only the old, whose pilgrimage is very nearly at an end, for the young ought never to have so dark and melancholy experience added to such other burdens as they must unavoidably carry.

Perhaps it is a reasonable requirement, if not a duty, that an unbeliever in Christianity, especially one that once believed in it thoroughly, as it is held and taught by orthodoxy, should state clearly both what he does not believe, as I have done on page 239, and also what he does believe, as I have also done on page 246. These two statements, taken together, compose or define what is commonly understood by the word *atheist*, or *materialist*. When an orthodox priest attempts to describe an atheist, he always purposely misrepresents and misstates the atheist's position, with reference to his conception of God, and he talks somewhat in this way: "Atheism, although a pleasing theme for a critical argument over a champagne supper, is but a poor staff to lean upon when the worn out traveler approaches the mysterious portals of the unknown land. He had refused to believe in a personal God, he had scoffed at the idea that there was any deity to whom the individual can appeal in the hour of grief or trouble, with the hope of separate mercy or grace, but now that he has in his unbelief floated away from the

shores of life, and feels himself borne away on the irresistible current to that mysterious other side," what does he not now believe in, for I must now settle this question. I dare not think of any future, besides, what can come? I know there is nothing; have I not heard that demonstrated by smarter men than I am? Yes! I know there is nothing, after one short pang, any more than there is pain in the nerve of a tooth when the tooth is gone. Such is the orthodox statement. Not one word of any such argument is ever used by any genuine or real atheist, meaning one who has graduated from orthodoxy into atheism as I have. The faith of the most earnest orthodox Christian in the future life, is faint and unsatisfactory when compared with the absence of any faith whatever in reference to a future life, for I have had both of these experiences, therefore I am able to judge as to their relative value. A genuine atheist reasons in this way: We do not fear death, because it is inevitable, nor do we fear life; we believe that it is easier for some people to be good, or to become good, than for others, and that a hope of a future existence is no benefit, and that a true conception of God excludes such a hope, and that science forbids such hope; therefore, no resurrection of human individuals is possible, and immortality is only a humbug of a diseased imagination, and as to any heaven or hell as a dwelling place of individuals, the science of astronomy destroys forever and finally any such hope or fear. We do not believe that once everything was good and perfect in this world, and that all evils came into the world through man's fault, although many of them did; and therefore man can repair these evils, but not so far as to reach absolute perfection in any body or anything. We do not think that every good deed finds its proper reward, or every evil deed its proper punishment, or ever can. We neither know, or ought we to care, either where we came from or whither we go. We only know that we are here, on this insignificant planet, and that we must take things as they are, and that we ought to do our best in everything, as in doing this we are happy, as far as happiness reasonably can be expected to be reached by man. In social as well as in political things we believe there must be order and liberty combined. We believe that love, as commonly understood, when we are separated from filial or parental love or esteem, is nothing but sexual lust, or preference for a particular individual, and that the love of God is imaginary bosh. We believe that man is not born only to suffer, nor only to labor, but he ought to enjoy what he reasonably can in the present life, and many other such things. Any species of delusion, but more particularly religious delusion, when it assumes the advanced form of fanaticism, should teach us, among its other moral traits, that the influential classes in any community, and those who take upon them-

selves to be leaders of the people, are fully as liable as are those whom they lead to all the passionate error that has ever characterized the maddest mob. But alas! Where shall I find one who will dare to print this work of mine—a censor who will not expunge its most objectionable passages; or, if printed, a bookseller who will venture to offer so bold a work to his customers. It is not, I grant, what I would have made it, if I had more education and more ability, but imperfect as it is, it may help some few to comprehend its intent as well as a more elaborate work.

It has been found necessary, in former pages of this work, to allude in a critical manner to the Bible, and this has been necessary because on it has been constructed two of the most extensive and influential religious systems with which we are familiar. These are the Jewish, founded entirely on the old testament, and entirely ignoring the new testament, and the Christian, who invented the new testament and added it to the old, and uses both, and at the same time regards the Jew as not entitled to any share in the scheme of redemption. Among all the commentators who have from time to time endeavored to ascertain who were the authors of any of the many detached portions that together make up the Bible, nothing positive or conclusive has ever yet been discovered, but probability, or even possibility, is as near certainty as has yet been discovered, and in fact it is a question of small moment, but whoever the writer was who wrote the first five books of the old testament, it is evident to us who live in this enlightened age of the world that he wrote a false account of the creation, and of the whole matter of which such account treats, such as the fall of man, the flood, and many others like them, and consequently the writer was not divinely directed, or, as we say, inspired, for at the time at which orthodox chronology asserts this account was written, no person understood anything about astronomy, or physiology, or geology, or natural philosophy, and as they felt obliged to find some way to explain the origin of material things and natural phenomena, the mode he adopted satisfied such of his contemporaries as were disposed to inquire, and crude and imperfect as it was, and still is, it has usurped and held the place of actual fact by all men who found their religion upon the Bible, and who have enough interest in such matters to inquire, and much easier than to pursue any inquiry, so as to arrive at any more satisfactory a result and it ought not to surprise any person that such is the case, for do we not, alike, the learned and unlearned, yet speak and write of sunrise and sunset, when we absolutely know, because astronomy has clearly proved and demonstrated that our sun is stationary, as to orbit, but moveable as to its revolution, consequently sunrise and sunset should be regarded and



described as reappearing in the morning and disappearing in the evening, in consequence of the rotary motion of the earth. The ancients, up to a short time ago, knew nothing of all this, for they, up to the time of Galileo, in the fifteenth century, or about four hundred years ago, believed and taught that the earth was flat and stationary, having neither orbit or rotation, but ascribed all motion to the moveable sun and planets, to explain day and night, and it never has been disclosed how the ancients explained the changes of the seasons, or the variations of the length of day and night, which then, as now, were always uniform.

The modern science of evolution has caused the creation of all material things, including man and animals, to appear still more absurd and untruthful, and that of woman the most foolish of all, for the statement "in the image of God created he him," man, "male and female, created he them," animals, shows clearly that the distinction of sex was just as feasible and proper in one form of animal as another, if you insist upon maintaining the theory of the scripture of a special creative act of the almighty; but if evolution is permitted to explain the origin of all things, it sets aside the need of any creative mind or fiat of almighty power, and at this point arises a conflict so important and far reaching as to oblige the advocates of a special theory of creation to prove their position, instead of as merely they have done in all former times, assuming, a false and untenable one. Science, in both geometry and astronomy, has long ago proved some part of the Bible false in its teaching as to chronology or time, geology has also demonstrated it false; evolution is yet a new science in comparison with others, consequently it has not yet far enough advanced to clearly prove all its premises, but enough has been already proved and recorded by Darwin and Spencer in physiology to show the impossibility of the special creation theory, and when that is removed from the Bible you may as well dismiss the rest, for a divine authorship of a revelation is not both true in some things and false in others, or capable of authorizing his secretary to so write as to contradict himself. The real truth is, and ever has been, the majority of mankind as a whole in past times, and largely in the present time, like childhood in all times and places, is amused but not instructed by fables, hence their ignorance and stupidity causes them to believe that this great array of worlds was made for the contemptible purpose of revolving around our little insignificant planet, and all the glittering circles of the stars made to serve no better end than to enliven a dreary winter night. Such a course is both pursued and recommended by the priest, because it is the easiest way to get over the difficulty, for it requires less study or thought. Even that great geometrician, Pythagorus, who lived and died six hundred years before our era began, although he

approached nearest to the true idea of the motion of the heavenly bodies, and of the spherical shape of the earth, of any ancient philosopher, became bewildered and lost in the wilderness of error by which he was surrounded, and the fierce opposition of the pagan priesthood. He had studied nature so much that he rejected the dogmas of his priests and those of the Mosaic testaments, for he considered that by listening to the voice of nature speaking to the ear of reason, he was in no danger of error. He left on record this sentence: "The Mosaic record, or testament, asserts that God made the heavens and the earth in six days, but they bear no marks of such a creation, for their course is eternal; and as to appointing the sun to no higher mission than to give light to this speck of matter we call earth, had the almighty called me to his counsel I would have taught him a wiser plan of producing day and night. Put a wire through an orange, fasten it obliquely so it can revolve, set a lamp to represent the sun, cause the orange to revolve towards the light, and the true cause of day and night is revealed." But even he was not yet enough freed from superstition, and did not live long enough to realize the full importance of his discoveries, but he looked as I look upon all religions, as formed to impose upon the unlearned masses of men, and he as well as I learned and was forced to adopt the policy of conforming to the prejudices of mankind among whom we are obliged to live, and depend on coming generations to do tardy justice to our memory, for no man of science has ever been able to wholly escape from the nets spread around him by his greatest enemy, the Christian church. Nature arranges all her movements in circles, more or less exact, therefore the canopy over us we call the sky is, or appears to us to be, a circular dome intersecting a circular horizon. The earth a convex ball, and each small atom that floats in the sunbeam so as to become visible to our eyes, is of a globular form. The seasons roll a perpetual round, and as a circle has no beginning or end so must the material universe be eternal, because nature is forever an active principle, whose changes neither add to or detract from the original matter of the universe, and while she resists intrusion into her secrets, she still will permit science to inquire, and if able to have enough patience she will reveal as much as is required to satisfy the limited capacity to receive of the present human understanding, and reserve a more complete disclosure for the future better developed man. Every human being, not an idiot or insane, has some faint indistinct conception or impression of a supreme being, called, for want of a more sensible name, God. The conception of this being, or if you please nonentity, which the atheist has, destroys that attribute on which the Christian rests his chief reliance to make his God attractive to men, which is the invention of the

writer of the fourth gospel of the new testament, whoever that was is yet uncertain, namely, a God of love. No Jewish writer before this one, if he turns out to be a Jew, had ever regarded the one God, in any other manner than an angry or avenging God, both jealous and suspicious, who would only exercise mercy, if at all, in return for long, earnest and patient supplication and strict obedience to all his commandments and precepts, and the Jews still adhere to such a conception of God, and imagine that sentiment named love, when it is applied to any other object than one's children or parents, as only the invention of the Christian's fictitious new testament writer, who, like all writers of fiction, monstrously exaggerate what is only a malady engendered by an effeminate idleness, and fostered by a sickly imagination and extravagant descriptions of human beauty or talent, that is never found real, and ends in the most dismal disappointment. The first three gospel writers failed to discover this foolish attribute of either God or his son, but the fourth, who wrote a long time after the others, made love the leading element of his God's character, so as to give stability to the newly discovered doctrine of the atonement, for to elaborate and complete so absurd a doctrine the attribute of love was required, to do away with its opposite hate which the God of the Jews not merely had, but continually exercised in all his dealings with them, and ended by wholly dispersing them among all nations, causing their extinction, only as individuals. This absurd doctrine of the atonement is a favorite theme for pulpit eloquence, and it must be admitted it is a very cunning invention of the theologians on whom the priests of all Protestants rely, but shrewd as it is, no doctrine of that species of fraud is more absurd and untruthful than it is, but false as it is, it is still the very ground work or foundation stone, the loss of which would destroy the whole system of Christianity; hence its defense is fierce and persistent by a certain class of men in each orthodox sect, which, while not the whole, yet is the greater part of their priesthood and theologians; but now there begins to appear some noted theologians, who are so able and efficient scholars that any theological institutions are anxious to secure their services, and put them at the very head of such bodies, who are independent and bold enough to take and advocate advanced positions, and able enough to defend them against all opponents. Among these is the distinguished scholar who now is at the head of the Union Theological Seminary of New York, a Presbyterian institution, who boldly declares that the Bible contains many errors, and that its authors had no claim to divine guidance more than others, and that no prophet has ever predicted any future event; and Professor Briggs is now undergoing his trial for heresy, and its result is sure to divide the sect in which he teaches, and

if not extinguish it will greatly weaken it. Another similar trial is now in progress, charging one Smith, who is a theological professor of a Presbyterian theological seminary in Cincinnati, who not only coincides with Professor Briggs, but goes further, and is more radical than he, and now just at this time, February, 1894, the great Hebrew scholar who was the head of the venerable Yale College in New Haven for many years, but is now at the head of a new theological seminary in Chicago, the largest and best endowed that this country has ever produced, is at this very time engaged in writing and in delivering publicly a series of lectures whose design and effect is to destroy the Holy Bible of the Christian world. This is the great world wide and universally known Dr. Harper, and he is engaged, as the secular papers announce, in the dissemination of instruction in these lectures, that while only professing to criticise, he is really undermining the foundation on which the Bible rests, and that is its divine origin, and its exact, perfect truth, and the effect of this will be to sap the faith and belief of the Christian world, because his reputation and universally acknowledged superiority as a theologian and a scholar entitles him to belief, and challenges adverse criticism, and his demonstrations destroy all the vitality on which the Bible rests for authority, and a few more of these lectures, of the general drift and tenor of those already delivered in public, and there will be nothing left of the word of God, if indeed he do not abolish God altogether, and turn atheist. He has already shown, this secular paper of Chicago, March 14, 1894, says, that the Mosaic account in Genesis of the creation is a mere fiction, built up out of the fertile imagination of some unknown writer, and that no such an event ever could or ever did occur, and that a creative act per se, or of itself, the making of something out of nothing, belongs to the realm of final causes, and therefore can have no realization in the human mind, and this is an affirmation that is not now disputed by any scientific man on earth, but is disputed by some bigoted mossbacked theologians, because such an admission of the wisdom and power of Almighty God to have any limit, would destroy the whole fabric of imposture.

Consequently, the Mosaic account of a beginning when nothing existed, and God made the whole visible and the invisible universe out of such materials, is beneath even the dignity of a dream, and then the time which is given as six literal days, within which this act of creation is said to have been performed, is conclusively shown by scientific investigations that even this little speck we call earth was not made either in six days, or six million years, but was always in existence, and always will be, to say nothing of any other worlds, of which astronomy can demonstrate is of uncounted millions of worlds, and still space is only



sparsely occupied. And another fiction, a universal deluge, was not only impossible, but was a mere assertion born of ignorance of the writer of the account, or of his design to impose on the credulity of his contemporaries and their successors.

Another absurdity, to call it by no harsher name, is the still more important one, of the Biblical doctrine of the unity of the human race. All ethnologists have long since concluded and demonstrated that the human race never descended from a single pair, hence the story of Adam and Eve, the garden of Eden, the temptation and the fall of man, is but a fairy tale, which can only be told for the purpose of amusing children, whether partly or fully grown, and these conclusions have been arrived at and are upheld by investigators outside of theology, because if theologians know these conclusions are the true ones they never will admit them to be, for it would destroy both their system and occupation. So, if Adam and Eve never existed, they never were tempted by the devil, and they never sinned, or fell from grace, and what becomes of the foundation doctrine of original sin and the necessity of the subsequent scheme, involving the atonement and redemption. Says the theologian, the possible consequences of such a discovery as this are too great for contemplation, and it cannot be tolerated, and must be resisted. What! No fall for man. No redemption, atonement or salvation! What becomes of the priesthood after such an admission? Let us by all means in our power put down both the disseminator of such heresy, and the heresy itself. But I say, gentlemen, with all due respect, you are too late, and your adversaries are both too numerous and too well instructed for you to longer impose upon your day is over, and the golden stream of revenue, upon which only you can thrive, is fast drying up, so you must find your place among other more respectable avocations.

Much criticism has been indulged in, and many sarcastic sneers have been written in the foregoing pages, to try to make all priests and theologians, of whatever degree, appear ridiculous, but no lengthy, clear description of them as a class separate from other men of much definiteness has yet found a place in these pages, therefore I will endeavor to supply that deficiency, and give what I consider ought to be applicable to them as a class; but some individuals, a few, may be excepted, without infringing upon the rule. When the American nation had achieved by a long war their freedom and independence from Great Britain, and afterwards framed a constitution, they in that instrument neglected to acknowledge God as entitled to any share in enabling our armies to be victorious, or our statesmen to frame a suitable government for a free people, or to ask him to give stability and prosperity to this free govern-

ment, so that the priest was entirely overlooked and disregarded; so what does Satan do but send the priest up the back stairs, and these holy men have never ceased to lament this contemptible treatment and have never ceased to find or to try to find some plausible reason why they were excluded from any share in the construction of this political fabric, as well as the religious fabric of which they were the architects and builders. Such great men as George Washington, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Tom Payne and their associates regarded the priests of their day and country not only with indifference, but with contempt and abhorrence, and described them somewhat rudely, but still truly, as being at the same time, ponderous and lithe, pachydermatous and feline; no rhinoceros ever had so tough a hide, no cat so velvety or adroit a paw; in the hard head of a somewhat superannuated lamb of the fold he has the eyes of a lynx, the fangs of a venomous serpent, and the forked tongue of the very devil himself; on one side of his nature he is as barren as a sandy desert, on the other as fruitful as the delta or oasis; one side as inflexible as granite, on the other as facile and yielding as a reed; he is at one and the same time the hardest and the most pliable substance in the universe; he slips over you so smoothly that you do not feel him, but wherever he touches you the skin peels off and the poisoned flesh rots down to the very bone; a trip hammer would not crush him, and a vise could not hold him. Theology indurates him and politics grease him; you could not lay your finger on him without touching the point of some petrified theological dogma; his disposition is intolerably peevish, irritable and violent, also intensely selfish, yet no man's passions are ever so docile or harmless when his interests require them to be so, unequaled wariness or cunning marks everything he says or does; even in his violent moods he has reduced dissimulation to a fine art; if he chooses to be angry he has reduced it to a fine art, and if his anger is a short madness, he has brought its methods to perfection; when its exhibition, in his judgment, would tend to injure him, he gulps down his rage with a quotation from the gospels, and serenely replies to an insult, when he has nothing to fear, but something to gain, and then his tongue can slit a heart at every slash; he is the adroitest strategist that ever contrived a swindle, or engineered craft never has forged a weapon of which he is not the master; the arch fiend himself would pick up many useful hints by noticing his maneuvers, especially in conversation, manners and expression of face of this clerical knave, when endeavoring to carry some point by artifice, when he lowers his voice and fixes his stealthy eyes upon your face, and yet with an air of perfect indifference puts the decisive point in some vague, obscure circumlocution, or in some antithesis but half expressed; if he meets with a rebuff

from you he instantly withdraws all his forces, and then not a vestige of his nefarious purpose remains visible, but presently he comes sneaking up some unguarded road, and when he sees that by this process he has utterly failed, and any further prosecution of this enterprise would likely be entirely futile, he sneaks away directly with remarkable acquiescence from that project, raises the siege at once and forever, and then devotes himself to new schemes with the same zeal and artifice, without giving his late failure a thought.

He can change front much faster than any politician, and abandon a cause with less remorse, and return to it with less shame, than can any other class of men, firmly believing his fictitious Jesus to be divine, the Saviour of men, and denouncing with the utmost devout sacred fury the whole race of contemptible infidels as worse than any heathen, and at the same time adores the old prophets and apostles. When he is about to take a step that he expects will increase his reputation for vulgarity, he then always hesitates, coquets, and squirms, after the fashion of politicians, and says he is afraid such a course may injure him, in fact, ruin him, a common lie of politicians when they guess wrong, as they often do; he, like them, keeps a gang of lick spittles constantly in his employ, and uses them as long as he thinks he requires them, but the instant any one of these begins to work any injury he instantly both casts him off and forgets him; he is as relentless as fate in taking advantage of the necessities of those he can make serve his purpose, being so very oily, so plausible, so disinterested, so kind, so sincere and sinuous, and when he has thoroughly used his victim, so that he is entirely done with him, he spits upon him breaks him in pieces, figuratively, and throws him scornfully aside; but he never does this 'till, for some reason such as crime or misfortune, producing dark, melancholy fate, which puts the wretch so completely in his power that he dare not even attempt revenge.

The Roman Catholic bishops, at the time when that great Italian poet Dante, wrote his great poem, the "Inferno," held the horrible dogma with the same tenacity as though it was eternal truth, that every soul born on earth before the pretended advent of Christ were burning in hell, without either any exceptions or prospect of relief, by means of the prayers of their believing successors, or merely for the crime of being so unfortunate as to be thus born, and this thought brings the writer to discuss at some length the subject of the religious creeds, which have before been merely mentioned, giving the manner by which they were first invented and put in force, and the purpose they have served and continue yet to serve.

It is a remarkable fact that the fictitious one called Christ, or any of

the fictitious apostles, never gave the slightest hint or intimation that any creed, or article of faith, as the word means, was necessary, and they never for a moment, any of them expected the system of Christianity would ever begin its existence, for it all died when he died, hence this whole system was a mere invention or after thought of a set of vile impostors. Whether this omission to outline any creed was an oversight or mistake of the fictitious authors of the new testament, or whether they lacked the ability to construct a creed adapted for universal use or acceptance, we never shall know, but we do know that that nest of humbugs who constructed the monstrosity which they afterwards named Christianity, soon found out by experience that they could make no progress without some creed, or bond of union, and the question of how to produce one was by them agitated many years, and all this time the converts from Judaism and paganism to Christianity were adrift on a tempestuous sea of doctrine, conflicting and contradictory, and without any compass or rudder they were drifting and tossing on the unknown sea of doubt, fearing a disastrous shipwreck, and no land in sight, and the Almighty God, when appealed to for assistance or direction in this extremity turned a deaf ear to all their supplications. Then they said one to another, "Go to! let us call a general council of the ablest men and theologians we have, and let them try and construct something for us to examine, and if it secures general approval we will adopt it as a standard of union." So in the second century the Council of Nice met, and after a fierce debate of more than two years' duration, of acrimonious disputes, of metaphysical hair splitting and theological jugglery, of political intrigue and ecclesiastical mummary, and display of the most vile and bitter passions, often breaking forth into words of denunciation, execration and anathemas, instead of charitable benedictions, a disgraceful squabble with clenched fists and drawn swords, when soldiers were both required and had, so as to prevent these holy bishops from taking each other by the throat, sometimes after these precautions resulting in the most bloody massacres and stealthy assassinations. History, both church and secular, tells us such was the Council of Nice, and it has never been disputed.

Such, substantially, has been the process by which all creeds have been originated and elaborated. The decree or results of such councils are plainly not matters of divine inspiration and are not founded on the rock of reason, but on the quick sand of credulity, ignorance and superstition, and they required and had at the outset of their career the stern command of that religious monster, Constantine, to all the priests to receive the decrees or findings of the Council of Nice as the dictates of the holy spirit, and from that day to this the Nicene creed stands both



unaltered and unrepealed, and is read to every one who aspires to the priestly office, and by him assented to before he can be ordained in both the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, and all who aspire to become members of either of these religious organizations are required to at least pretend to believe this absurd, nonsensical creed, and it is falsely called, to make it seem more holy or sacred, the apostle's creed, when all the theological rascals who made this creed well knew that no apostle ever gave the first hint that any creed was required. Various off shoots from the old or parent root of the church have, from time to time, as they came into being by internal divisions, made to themselves such creeds as the originators of these infant branches seemed to require. That of the oldest, or Calvinistic branch, called Presbyterian, was made at Westminster Abbey or church in London, England, and the council or convention were in constant session, with slight interruptions, more than seven years, spent in continuous debate and effort to invent a comprehensive creed, which has made its way so as to securely hold that conservative body in a sort of hateful disunion for about two hundred and fifty years, but there is now abundant indication that this creed is about to be abolished, or so modified as to destroy its original force. For a great many years the catechism, or concentrated essence of the Presbyterian's creed, has been used as a club or bludgeon, to convince would be heretics or doubters of their error, by stunning their sensibilities intellectually, for when it declares that God is the maker of heaven and earth, it philosophises, and the inference is that this God must be a celestial mechanic or artisan, for every intelligent person nowadays knows that creation is not a manufactured thing, but a growth; and likewise, when Christ is said to be seated on God's throne, at his right hand, we all know God has no throne or hands, so this is not a fact, but only fiction, or poetic, or extravagant language; but patience is sure to become both bewildered and exhausted, when the various nonsensical creeds of Christendom alone, to say nothing of other spurious religious systems, are attempted to be investigated or explained, and the best treatment they are entitled to is to class them, one and all, as so much useless, nonsensical rubbish, and this view shows us what a wonderful and inexcusable outrage it is, and always has been, for one people or even one man to try to force any particular religious belief on another people or man, for they all are no more or better than an unexplainable, unmeaning jargon of words, destitute of ideas, impossible of transmission from one person to another, or from one people or nation to another, having different language, climate and intellectual capacities and environments, and at its best design or intention it is nothing but a shrewd contrivance of the priesthood to produce a fountain from which may be made to

flow a large golden stream of revenue, to find its inevitable way into their greedy pockets at last.

What a strange, incomprehensible mystery the Christian's Bible is, and a still greater mystery is the fact that the people, many of whom are highly educated and intelligent, shrewd business managers, have allowed the priest to secure and retain such an unbounded influence over them as to prevent their getting so much as a desire to investigate or even to reach a doubt, of the infallibility of every statement they read or hear the priest read in that holy book. That portion of the Bible we call the new testament announces resurrection from the dead, and even goes so far as to give several instances in which that impossible feat has been realized. The priest says the Bible, both the old and new testament, is the word of God, but yet in the same book is also written "As a cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he that goeth down to grave shall come up no more." That must also be true, for it stands in the same true Bible, and therefore I must just as much believe one as the other. So I believe there is no immortality, for the most perfect creation it must crumble to dust the same as does any and every work of human hands, and everything in nature must sooner cease to exist than can nature itself, which has formed dust. The orthodox Christian asserts (and the word orthodox includes all Christians but Catholics) that all created beings, all worlds, will finally perish. If that proves true, Jehovah will then float in solitude, amid the ruin of his works, which were pronounced very good and permanent amid chaos, as at and before the "Beginning." Again I repeat, from holy, inspired writing, "As the cloud consumes and vanishes away, so also shall none return from the grave." Those great foundation doctrines, on which the orthodox Christian system is built, and named by theologians justification, adoption, sanctification, atonement, or redemption, all depend for their force or their vitality or truth on the various epistles of St. Paul, so called, and the reason why he was called saint was because his writings were received by the council, a majority of which decided what were divinely inspired and what were not. These letters or epistles were pretended to have been actually written by a man who once was named Saul of Tarsus. Who and what was he, and how much is he entitled to be regarded as fit authority on which to found any permanent structure or system? He was a young apostate Jew, and, if contemporary historians can be relied on, he apostatized from the Jewish faith from a spirit of revenge or retaliation on his tutor Gamaliel, because he refused him his daughter in marriage; but he, in his harangue of defense on a trial for sedition before a Roman magistrate, gives another and very different reason for his apostacy, and is found in the 26th chapter of Acts of the

Apostles, in which speech he is trying to justify or explain his conduct in stirring up strife and sedition among different pagan or Gentile peoples, the inevitable result of both his precepts and practices, in consequence of which more or less who came under his influence were inclined, and in some few cases did, apostatize from their former religions, and in consequence become unruly and disobedient subjects of their Roman rulers. This speech, which out of mere courtesy he was permitted to make in that public place, plainly sets forth what was plainly a notorious fact, that he had been both an intense hater and a fierce persecuter of the new sect, he then being a member of the strictest sect among the Jews, a Pharisee, which then was, and now is, a bigoted, fanatical hater of everybody not also a Pharisee. That idle, foolish, untruthful reason which he in this speech gives, how he came to change from a hater and persecuter into a lover and apologist of Christ's religion, is far too silly to merit any notice, much less to furnish any reason why he should have any divine assistance to enable him to be the inventor of any system more beneficial or true than the one from which he had apostatized, and it received none at that time, either from the magistrate, the audience, or the genuine apostles, such as Peter and his associates, who, on account of their experience as associates and lovers of the person and teachings of Christ in his lifetime, and his sending to them the comforter on the day of pentecost, to fill them with the Holy Ghost, and instruct them, so they could instruct all people on earth in their own tongue, without either study, teacher, or even books of instruction; these original apostles always regarded the former Saul, but the now Paul, with suspicion, and his teachings with abhorrence, and refused to associate with him, keeping him at such an isolation and neglect that he finally took the hint, without waiting for a kick, and wandered away by himself among pagan barbarians, and he, in consequence of a want of co-operation or recognition, was obliged to swim or sink, as he might, unassisted by any of them, be able; and it was he alone that invented the most, if not all the foundation doctrines and rites on which Christianity was constructed, and is now trying to spread and make permanent and universal, with but poor success, for if you eliminate the Catholics in the census of Christians, which orthodoxy always does, Christianity is constantly diminishing in its ratio of the population of the world at large; for it is no longer any secret, but is publicly known, that millions of people in all civilized and Christian countries have given up Christianity, and with it religion itself, of every name and variety. Millions of others cling to the old beliefs, as a sort of anchor, because nothing any better is in sight, but fear to let go the anchor and drift away; and those who still believe in Christianity among the masses do so honestly,

because they have been instructed to do so by the priest and by others who have had their care, since their very birth, and when maturity is reached, they as a rule neither know or care whether their teaching has been true or false, realizing not or even suspecting that the time has come for a change into a new form, perhaps not strictly a religion, but more in the nature of an inquiry, or individual search after truth, and a discovery and separation from error.

Perhaps the word idealism comes as near as any other to what modern civilization means by the position it intends to occupy in future, the striving for an ideal or the perfection in every thing, when the old systems of discord between religion and humanity at large disappears, and in its place comes the ideal, for mankind as a whole and for each individual, for the ideal of science and art, for the ideal or perfection of civilization, for the ideal of all virtues, for the ideal of family, community, society, and humanity in all its forms. This reformation is not merely aggressive, but also creative and reforming, and works not by actual force, but by organization, example and instruction. As long as science fails to decide against stimulants, we are not required to wholly discard or refrain from using them in moderation, and therefore temperance societies may be considered on the whole imperceptibly beneficial. This idealism has no knowledge of any future life, and hopes for nothing at all beyond this life, but is willing to concede there is in nature, or somewhere outside of humanity, an absolute power, over which mankind has no influence or control, and to which any appeal is useless, but the true essence of this power we can never hope to know, and ought not therefore to inquire, but with a suitable reserve the words creator, providence, almighty, may be used, but as to believing an actual personal being to exist, as a kind of individual, nothing is further removed than such an absurd view of this unknown power or force, and we do not therefore believe any man or woman ought to be so elevated as to be esteemed an object of worship or reverence, or that any God ever did or ever will become man, but we are still willing to admit, because we can prove it, that there are great differences in men, and that some do more for the benefit of mankind and true civilization than others, but such superiority is not to be ascribed to any special merit of such a person, but rather to superior environments, both in his birth, as to place and time, creating more favorable opportunities for development, so that if some are born a genius, and afterwards finds favorable conditions of development, it is not wholly his merit, but much benefit results in following good examples; but as to worshipping any object of the imagination, and call that object God, and expect to receive any favor or even recognition from such an imaginary source, in answer to any prayer, is too mon-



strous an absurdity to be worth any effort to refute; and we have no right to even inquire how or when matter came to be, for it is only idle curiosity that prompts any one to wish to be informed, and it always will be beyond the grasp of mind to do more than speculate or theorize, nor can we ever reach a point of development to do more than guess what will be the last end and endless destiny of any being or form of matter, for these and all like these are open questions, and science is permitted to freely discuss them.

Whoever wrote the gospel of John, and the three epistles of John, wrote a mess of trash respecting some beings, which he for want of a better name, or else by reason of false instruction, called the Love of God to his children. What a false conception that is, and not only false but ridiculous as well. What is love? It is nothing but a graceful or polite unmeaning word, without any corresponding sentiment with which it can be compared to express an idea, which idea is a low but still a natural and general sentiment, or feeling, that is common to all grades of animals, and the highest epithet adapted to express the emotion falsely called love is animal attraction or sexual desire, for it never can exist where but one sex is found; so we regard such stuff as a God of love as only a theological trick, more impossible and absurd than any that has been before noticed in this memorandum.

Another monstrous and untruthful theological dogma is the great reverence had and great reliance placed on the foolish, unmeaning emblem of a cross. Let not any Christian glory in that emblem, for it has always since, and very likely before, human history began, been held in a singular veneration, and adopted as one mode of executing criminals, and was actually, set up as an object of worship by many tribes of the East, before it was afterwards set up in the temple of Serapis, in Egypt; and that was done many ages before the pretended advent of Christ, so that this emblem is only another rascally fraud, intended to deceive the ignorant rabble, and form an excuse to get up a mock sentimental enthusiasm of sympathy, to operate on the emotional nature of the ignorant masses, for the priests have always known it to be only a fraud or imposition. Another monstrous humbug of the priest, which he always chatters, whether the occasion calls for it or not, such as at the burial of the remains of some loved or highly esteemed friend. These sentimental, priestly numbskulls tell their dupes who are present on such occasions to hope in a sentimental way to take their last earthly rest in such goodly company as they can always find in any first-class cemetery, and then have their graves covered with roses that grew in a greenhouse, and were cut with silver shears. Those great, renowned, ancient philosophers, such as Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle

and others believed and taught that God had actual, real children, and these children were all eternal and unbegotten, and this belief came to them from tradition, and this tradition sprung from mythology, like all other such foolish notions, but, foolish and untenable as it is, the foundation of Christianity comes from just such a myth, and discloses an irksome, agonizing care, a superstitious industry, an aching humor to see and understand what is not to be seen or understood, and to be doing what signifies nothing when it is done, and if they can possibly lug in a passage of scripture, no matter whether applicable or not, or a supposed prophecy, from even the fourth book of Esdras, or any other non-existent book, these sagacious writers and reasoners will insert this into the mighty hypothesis, like the keystone in the arch, to give it strength and stability, if not perpetual durability; scarcely, however, have they completed this goodly superstructure of fraud and deception, when in comes some agnostic or atheist, such as Ingersoll, and at one blow he tumbles the whole fabric about their ears. This straight and narrow way, that is said to lead to eternal bliss for instance, is a shrewd invention of the Christian theologian or priest of the former times, and may be compared appropriately to a public walk of faith, a sort of religious turnpike, in which the few privileged who stray into it, or are enticed into it by the priest, to avoid or escape from the throng which patronize the broad road that leads to perdition, and which may be traversed free, are in return for such escape and fear of contamination required to pay enough toll to build the turnpike, and to keep it in good repair, and enrich the stockholders besides, and this toll is gathered by the priest in the form of his salary, and the various schemes or contrivances to enable you to travel this straight and narrow way, and this is kept up to the end of life, and you are led to expect that you will find a deposit in heaven as a reward for all this fidelity and generosity. Is not the assurance of the Mahometan priest the most attractive and reasonable instruction how to navigate his road to the realms of eternal bliss, for he instructs his dupes that in his heaven or at the terminus of the road, at death, you will have a seat on a cushion of clouds, and are there provided with a chibouk to smoke, and while beautiful maidens are tickling the soles of your feet with rosy fingers, and you can forever enjoy the pleasant sensation, and at the same time feast your eyes and imagination in anticipation of completing your felicity by a more close and intimate association, while the Christian priest can do no more to make his heaven, at the end of his turnpike, attracting, than that you are to stand or sit in eternal idleness before the throne of God, and in singing hymns and praising his greatness and goodness eternally. Both of these idle fancies are nothing but a kind of wild fanaticism, which is

peculiar to all religions, in all countries, and in every age of human existence, and this one specimen of folly is given as only a sample of many thousand such fanatical forms that constantly endeavor to force its worthless convictions upon unwilling peoples, and this is urged by theologians and priests of these various forms to be both good and evil at one and the same time. Such is the absurdity of theology, only a vile sham and a cunning snare.

A conspicuous instance of this is divulged in the manner the gospels were written, as well as the matter they contain, for no one of the multitude of commentaries that have been written have ever pretended or tried to prove any nearer than a probable time before which they were not written, and they all agree that they were not written till near the close of the century that began when they pretend Christ was born, and then they were derived wholly from tradition, which is only fallible human memory, handed verbally along from one generation to another, in detached descriptions of many impossible miraculous events, and many parables, and miscellaneous instructions, healings, conversations and predictions, and the utter want of agreement when any details are set forth, and the addition from time to time of much absurdity, if not actual fiction; such, for instance, the manner never before or since heard of, a human birth after an impossible impregnation of a virgin, who, after such birth, and after having several other children, still remained a virgin; and then the hiding of this child in an impenetrable obscurity for thirty years, and then bringing him forward in such a way, a mere idle tramp, with a band of ignorant boobies as associates, and ending his career so swiftly and in such a disgraceful manner. This whole scheme is only a theological trick or invention.

The great end and aim of all those who indulge in religious speculation, which is falsely called knowledge, is only this: all differ essentially from each other, and all have or say they have the same title to belief, for it has always been and is the self imposed task of theologians of one species to demolish the speculations of their predecessors, and at the same time elevate their own more improbable theories in their stead, which are destined in turn to be uprooted and replaced by the air castles of a succeeding generation. Thus it would seem that pretended knowledge and genius, of which these learned men make such great parade, consists in endeavoring to detect the errors and absurdities of those of their own kind who have gone before, and in inventing new errors and absurdities greater than those they seek to demolish, to be in turn detected and exposed by those of their own set who come later on the stage. The most plausible theories, that seem so mighty and wonderful to their originators, are nothing better or more important than so many soap

bubbles, with which the priests and theologians hope to amaze the people, and which they would dignify with the name of wisdom and eternal truth. They in such a way merely amuse and deceive themselves, because the more honest but vulgar crowd stand gazing at them in the most stupid wonder and admiration, and dignify these learned boobies as wise and worthy men, when, after all, theologians of all grades are only deceiving or amusing themselves, while they are imposing on their dupes, with things and subjects so totally incomprehensible as to be beyond any finite mind to reach, and also totally worthless if they could be comprehended. These insignificant, miserable, fanatical, theological bigots, including all priests, continually ask us, who they designate as destroyers of all human hopes and aspirations, when we attack and endeavor to destroy their false systems and beliefs, what we propose to give them in exchange, as though the destroyer of weeds and thistles was by reason of such destruction obliged to replace them with useful productions, or at least to sow good seed. I reply that we recognize no such obligation, for we are public benefactors by so doing, but we are ready to go so far as to admit that morality, having always been the chief merit of both the pagan and Jewish systems, was degraded and driven from the new testament scriptures, because it neither gives any promise of future reward, or terrifies its possessor with the fear of future punishment, therefore the priest sets it aside as of no value in and of itself. The disciples of this independent doctrine are able to show numerous conspicuous instances of the perfectability of human actions, produced by the unassisted decisions of the human intellect, on the limits of abstract right and wrong. The moral man admires virtue because it is very beautiful, and puts it in practice because he considers it to be beneficial, while they do not abstain from a vicious act for the reason that it is sinful, but simply in obedience to their reason, because it is both uncomely and degrading; therefore they judge of the quality of an act by its consequences.

It has been asserted and constantly maintained, in what has hitherto been written in this book, that the priest has always been and still is in nearly all forms of religion the head or leader and guide of human affairs, as well secular as religious. In periods so remote in the past that history fails to reach, so as to describe how this ascendancy was acquired, this fact is clearly manifest, for as soon as history, for many centuries before Jewish or Bible history, as we have it, was written, began to record the history of the Aryan races, who first invaded and then overran the country now called India, we find the priests, which were then, as now, called "Brahmins," struggling with the military caste called Kshattriyas for ascendancy and in the end they were victorious,



and from that time forth in them was concentrated all the sources of knowledge, both secular and religious. They became the depositaries of all the sacred books, all the books of philosophy and science, and also the laws of the then ancient Hindoo commonwealth, hence they became the custodians and the creators of all secular literature, and in such a way they then had and they still have a monopoly of vedic learning, and their practice or policy has always been to trace back every branch of knowledge and all intellectual effort to the "Veda." This priestly ascendancy has been many times assailed, and for a short time rendered dormant or weak, but it has always renewed its struggles for supremacy, and in the end has prevailed, so that for more than twenty-two centuries the priests have been the counsellors and guide of the Hindoo princes, and also the teachers of the Hindoo people. The priesthood of Buddhism has always been hereditary, and having in their sole control and possession, not only the vedas, or what is the Buddhist Bible, and vedic hymns, so that they have at their pleasure and for their own advantage effaced and altered as far as to them seemed expedient, all traces of such struggles as they have had to reach their present position, as to make it appear to the present priesthood that their "caste," or separate community, had originated or come forth from the mouth of God, and that they were divinely appointed from the very beginning for the very highest rank among men; and this identical practice has been followed, as far as circumstances have permitted, by all priests of all religions, in all time and in all lands; and always will continue to be till intelligence so overcomes ignorance, and reason so overcomes superstition, as to leave the cultivated human mind free to pursue the investigations of science and art, as to realize that any religion is not only useless, but also pernicious.

It has also been the intention of the writer in what has preceded, in reference to the origin of the Christian form of religion, to make it evident to the reader that it, like all the other systems, was a mere invention or fraud, for it has always been impossible for any person to bring forward any historical proof, outside of their own invented gospels; for in fact, and it is a well-known fact to all theologians, who instruct all priests to prepare them for their calling, to humbug the people, that all history is entirely silent about every event relating to the origin of Christianity, or even the cause why what is called the Christian era ever had a beginning, or even the precise time when it began; and when some doubter, or as they are usually designated, skeptics, drive the theologians into a corner so close that they cannot otherwise escape, the best they are able to do, when they are required to prove by history that any such being as the gospels describe has ever lived, is to refer to, in the

first place, "Josephus." Who and what was Josephus? He was a Galilean half-breed Jew, who was taken prisoner by the Romans and carried to Rome along with other prisoners, when Titus, a Roman general, made an end of the Jews as a nation. He craved the privilege, when in prison to have access to the captured historical records of the Jews, which were written in the Hebrew language, and rewrite them in Greek language; this privilege was granted, and his "Antiquities" is the result. Every scholar who has ever seen a genuine copy of Josephus in Greek will certify that not one word is found there about any Jesus Christ ever living in his country, Galilee, much less any person of his description ever being crucified by the Romans under Pontius Pilate, but the rascally Christian who translated the "Antiquities" into English, in order to promote its sale in Christian lands, forged a short paragraph about a mysterious man, if it be lawful to call him a man, and from him originated the Christians. This forgery is absolutely all the proof any person, whether theologian or not, can find in history, but to wriggle out of the corner another shallow device is resorted to like this: Some pagan writers, such as Tacitus, Seutonius, Pliny, and perhaps some others, speak of there being Christians in various parts of the Roman empire in their day, therefore there must have been a genuine Christ for them to spring from, when these theologian rascals well know that these writers made no distinction between all not pagans, but classed them all alike, whether Jew or what not, Christians, when referring to them at all. Such is the specimen of the candor of Christian theologians, who instruct the priests to continue this deception, for fear the golden stream of revenue will dry up if the fraud is discovered. The writer of the article in the Encyclopedia Britannica, entitled "Israel," has sketched the Jewish history from Abraham, through all their vicissitudes till their destruction and dispersion, which ended when the era which is called the Christian era, began. When the period in such history that names such Roman magistrates as Herod, Pilate, and others mentioned in the gospels, had authority in Palestine and Galilee, then, if ever, is the proper time to speak of such an individual, if such then lived, as Jesus Christ, who, if he ever lived at all, was infinitely superior to any one, or to even all his contemporaries put together; but not the slightest hint can be extracted from the history of that period that any such events or any such person as these gospels refer to either ever lived or ever was expected to appear by these Jews, or even desired, so therefore it is both fair and irresistible to conclude that the inventors of this imposition also invented its hero and his associates, and wrote a sort of fiction or novel, which after much struggle and controversy developed the humbug afterwards in the year

one hundred and forty-six was named Christianity, and its disciples Christians, and by adroitly placing it far enough back to reach a time when such transactions as these gospels or novel delineate could have occurred in Jerusalem and vicinity, for at that time the Jews had a semi-national existence, and that was the very last moment when such events were possible, for the Jews were immediately afterwards dispersed, and afterwards incapable of acting in concert in doing or wishing to do such a monstrous crime as this one laid to their charge, and which they all do yet and have ever since denied ever even having any motive or wish to do, and another reason why these impostors placed these transactions back in the past, was to prevent any investigation from reaching back to the source, to disprove these enormous lies, for such they were and still are, for fiction is too weak a word to characterize such infamy as the birth, life and death, to say nothing about any resurrection, which is the most abominable lie of the whole. The first effort these first impostors made was attempting so to reorganize the former humbug, Judaism, which had come to an ignominious end as a cohesive system, so as not to deprive it of its chief distinctive character, such as its festivals, its rites, its laws, and observances, for these externals were all lost, and these rabbis could no longer teach or apply either the moral or ceremonial laws, or have their usual synagogue worship, and consequently the attempt to entirely separate from everything heathenish had to be abandoned in time, and a compromise agreed to by the ecclesiastical managers on both sides, but the complete union between Judaism and heathenism, which finally made the new organization later name Christianity, when the head, or Christ, was invented, and when the church was substituted for the synagogue, because the pagans among whom the Jews were dispersed were both more numerous and more intellectual than the Jews were, and the Greeks had translated the Jewish scriptures into a form called the Septuagint, in the year 146, but the struggle to in a measure maintain Judaism was long and fierce, for fully five centuries, before Christianity fully triumphed.

When the secular arm, or the civil power, reinforced the ecclesiastical arm, or the religious power, in consequence of the pretended conversion of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, who was both before and after his conversion the most abominable wretch of which history has left any record, in the year 325 A. D., a political bias was united with the religious, and the ambition to spread and absorb by persuasion the pagans, this persecution by the Christians by retaliation for former persecutions of themselves by the pagans, was both fierce and universal, so that whole nations were made Christians by force, or by simply

converting the king, who used his position and power to compel his subjects to adopt his religion, and there has never been a period since that time that Christianity has not secured nearly the whole of their numerical strength by political management of the rulers of the various peoples, who afterwards were included and called henceforth Christian nations, so that all the ecclesiastics, from the various popes down, have had the assistance and support of the strong arm of man, and not the almighty arm of God, to prevent their entire extinction, and this secular encouragement and support has been given because it was considered by the powers that be that the cultivation of superstition among the masses of mankind was the easiest and most thorough way to restrain their natural passions, and govern them, and not because any intelligent rulers or even priests ever had the least confidence in the truth or reality of any of these monstrous humbugs that they propagated; consequently, the most sanguinary and bloody wars without number have been waged in the name and for the defence of Christianity, in some of its forms, and legislation has been so shaped and contrived as to relieve religious bodies of a large portion of taxation, and protect them from interference, and reserve for their use the invented Sabbath day, so that they may call the people into their sacred presence to unmolested and undisturbed instruct them in such manner as they consider the best to keep them in subjection, and influence them to generous contributions, to keep up these impositions; and all this is not done for the reason that these individuals are made better by this process, but because they are easier managed and made dupes of, and to gradually and imperceptibly strengthen their party, for it is only for want of the required power, and not the disposition, to do such an unparalleled act as to abolish all secular institutions, and rule the world wholly by religious bigotry, ignorance and superstition, and nothing but willful ignorance, and stolid bigotry or what is worse indifference, prevents scrutiny and examination of what simply one phase of fanaticism is capable of doing, and has already done, and yet purposes to do, to blight and curse the human race. The cursed institution of Romanism called "Jesuitism," for it alone and by itself, without the assistance of the numerous other Roman Catholic organizations, which are equally pernicious and vile, has done in the past, is now doing, and is intending to do, as soon as it is strong enough, which is no less than to trample upon and destroy every free government, and every aspiration of any and every human being, outside of themselves, to be other than the religious slaves and dupes of their system, which, without exaggeration, is the worst system that has ever cursed the human race. If any one doubts this assertion, let such person read in the revised Encyclopedia Britannica the



definition of "Jesuitism," and you will see described with candor and fairness a history or description of the most diabolically monstrous infamy the world has ever seen, and then to try to realize what an awful, abominable discrepancy is there disclosed between possession and practice, for if there is one thing more than another that Christianity is celebrated for in its pretension, it is its power to elevate and refine its adherents, and to restrain and modify human passions, and keep the possession of the race; and, bad as it is, Jesuitism embodies more that is salutary in its aims and objects than is to be found in any other of the multitude of secret societies, the aggregate of which go to make up the Roman and Greek Catholic Christian church, after more than three hundred years in organization and fifteen hundred years since they have had undisputed possession of the religious field in Europe, and to a large extent in America.

We are to remember these all claim to be the direct successors of Christ, through Peter and the other apostles, who were miraculously endowed with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Nothing is disclosed in any history of the enormities that are continually contrived and put into practice in all the nunneries and monasteries which are so numerous in every Catholic country, as that they keep in idleness and crime vast numbers of both sexes, and such revelations as might be had if the vows of secrecy were removed from the inmates, is only to be surmised, when we see and hear of here and there one who has had enough courage to desert from the hell into which they were enticed by the lying flattery of the priest. These revelations are not from pagan or Mahometan, or even Mormon sources, but from the genuine simon pure Christian church, who are ambitious to make these enormities universal, and I ask, in all candor and seriousness, what have they ever done beneficial to the race to furnish an offset to all this enormity? Assassination on a large scale is a favorite practice of Jesuit mercenaries. They have assassinated more Popes, whom they could not rule, than have died a natural death. Since Ignatius Loyola invented this infernal abomination, in about A. D. fifteen hundred and forty, and are at this very moment watching all the movements of the head ecclesiastics of their own kind, and all others, and all secular movements in Christian lands, with the most intense interest and anxiety, with the most hellish design and intention, to defeat in some way, fair or foul, every encroachment on their purposes and plans, and the chief reason why they are not more numerous or prosperous is because the process by which Jesuit priests are made is so intricate and long continued, requiring constant training in theology for thirty years on one theme, and such intense application of mental energy destroys their intellectual faculties for business man-

agement, that by the time they arrive at initiation they are incapable of much ability to cope with inferior minds, who have not confined their faculties to the constant pursuit and preparation for one idea, and hence the Jesuits have never had but two really able men in their order. These are its founder, Loyola, and Francis Xavier, who, with Loyola, was canonized in sixteen hundred and twenty-three, which process gave them the title of saint for a prefix, and also an annual feast or festival day through all subsequent time, and there is some reason to hope and expect that Jesuitism for this cause, the want of able managers, will finally perish.

About six hundred and fifty years "B. C." there was founded or invented the first system of religion in the Chinese Empire of which history has preserved any record, and it is still in existence there to some extent under the name of "Taoism," and was revived and more firmly established a hundred years later by Confucius, which has received, since his time, his name, and it is plain to see, from a treatise or book now accessible to scholars, that the moral precepts of both Judaism and Christianity are found in Chinese characters in which this book is written; that the Jewish idea of one God and the Christian idea of the trinity have been derived from this ancient source, but God as a creator is not found, because the system is like this: All things have always sprung up in nature without any word spoken, and they come to maturity and perish without any effort for their production or continuation, going through their processes without any display of ambition or pride, and the results are realized without any assumption of control or ownership, and it is owing to the absence of such assumption that the results and their processes do not diminish, and can never disappear or cease to act, and it only needs the same quality in the arrangement of human affairs to make society both beautiful and happy. Therefore a government conducted by sages or extra wise men would not only free the people from inordinate desires, fill their bellies, keep their aspirations feeble, and strengthen their bones, and if you can only keep the people without the desire to get knowledge they will surely be contented, and if by chance there be some who have tasted a little of knowledge, so terrorize them that they would not dare to put it in practice, and that would result in keeping all men outside of the priesthood as simple as little children.

Such is a brief outline of "Taoism," and much similarity can be perceived with both the teaching and practice of both Judaism and Christianity, for they both aim to keep people so simple in every country except America, that it will be easy to both dupe and govern them, for the priest has always said that the difficulty of governing any people is

that they both desire and have too much knowledge, and that any ruler who tries to govern a nation by wisdom is a scourge and tyrant, and that he who does not try to so govern them is a great blessing. Such teaching, put in force more than twenty-five hundred years ago, has been copied by all the subsequent inventors of systems of religion, as far and as near as circumstances will permit, and is now the chief corner stone of Romanism in every land where they have sufficient authority, such as in Spain, France, Italy, South America, Central America and Mexico; and even in free United States of America the main aim and strife of the Catholic hierarchy is that they may become strong enough by votes to abolish all free schools, and confine and monopolize all learning to the priestly office in its various forms. While it may be conceded that Protestantism is obliged to co-operate and incidentally support the system of free secular schools, it is at the same time charged that they only do so for the reason that the protection of the civil laws are required, and they could not exist without the organization of society on a basis of universal co-operation and amalgamation with irreligious rulers and civil magistrates of various grades, who are in all cases irreligious or else indifferent, and also that toleration and separation is decreed in the fundamental structure of any free government, hence priestly influence is in a great degree restrained and modified, not because of a free choice on their part, but for want of the necessary power to act independently; and it can be shown that the priests, in the early ages of Christianity, absorbed and got into their possession all the public libraries, containing the chief sources of information, and then monopolized and dispensed or withheld learning in the way and to the extent which they considered expedient, useful and necessary to perpetuate superstition and reverence for their dignity, and to continue their ability to extract revenue from them, and this practice of priestly monopoly of learning, and of then withholding it from those who pay them generously for instruction, has always prevailed in all forms of religion, in every country, and throughout all past time, and will continue as long as they can perpetuate their pernicious instruction by seizing the infant as soon as its intellect is enough developed to receive an impression, and causing its mother to start superstition in a feeble way, and as the faculty called mind increases in ability to comprehend stronger superstitious impression, send them to the priest, or what is equivalent, to the Sunday-school, and from there into some church organization, where the two humbugs called baptism and the Lord's supper are conferred upon them, in such a way and accompanied by such surroundings as are calculated to, and actually do, so deepen former impressions, that apostacy is rarely seen or even wished for by this dupe, who in nearly every case



are so permeated by superstitious reverence for a mere myth, that any imposition the priest wishes to teach them they are not only ready but eager to receive.

Those who attended the sessions of the parliament of religion, held in Chicago on the grounds of the World's Fair, do not need to be told that the advocates and defenders of the Christian form of religion came off second or third best in their arguments. Much information was there disclosed about the missionary enterprise among the orientals, such as Ceylon, India, Burmah, China, etc., in fact it is the "other side" of this question which the missionary reports studiously conceal and ignore, so that they may continue to extract the last morsel of revenue from their poor dupes, and which could not be done if they knew the real truth, for such knowledge would arouse not only indifference but indignation, so that all contributions would cease. While this information from the other side is very discreditable, and ought to be discouraging to the Christians who are conducting this Missionary enterprise, it is proportionately cheering and edifying to all classes of skeptics, who have always looked upon these efforts as not only outrageous, but useless and pernicious, and wholly unauthorized. Such able men were delegated to this convention, or parliament, as were able to not only meet Christians in their own land, but also to vanquish them by boldly and plainly warning them that no permanent success had yet been realized or was likely to be. Mr. Pung, a Chinese delegate, complains that such meagre translations of the Christian scriptures as have been attempted are so execrably done that no use can be made of them, and that nobody but silly women and still more silly girls ever frequent their places of worship, and he earnestly insists that these missionaries inquire into the moral character of their weak, silly converts, for none but the outcast class go near the missionaries, and the missionaries are, as a rule, intolerant and selfish, and inculcate no moral precepts beyond those which the people all have from their own priests in great abundance. Another instance is given by Mr. Dharampala, the Buddhist, from Ceylon: "What the people want, if they really want anything from these Christian missionaries, is the lowly, gentle, meek teachings of their pretended Christ, who we all regard as a mere myth, but not because we do not have them now, but because we want more of them than we have, instead of the gross vices which these missionaries both encourage and continually practice among us." Says Mr. Charya, a Brahmin, from India: "Christian missionaries have entirely failed in his country, for the reason, the religion which has such an unfounded claim, of superiority to every other must ever be disgusting to those to whom it is offered, however good it otherwise may be, because the missionaries endeavor



to make their converts believe that the eating the flesh of animals is a necessary preparation to baptism, and that baptism is a saving ordinance; and in a general way the Asiatics seem to have made their hosts aware that Western religionists, as they call all missionaries, impress them as destitute of gentleness and devoutness, for the Western temperament is to their mild and meditative Eastern natures something rough and almost brutal. The above is only the merest outline of these oriental revelations, but, meagre as it is, it fully sustains and confirms all the unfavorable criticisms of the writer in what has preceded on this missionary subject.

There is in America at this time, 1895, a celebrated man by the name of Robert G. Ingersoll, and his reputation is merited by his acknowledged mental abilities in the line of the civil law; his services are always in great demand, and his time so fully occupied in the preparation and oratorical defence or prosecution of the most intricate and important questions of law that ever comes before the judicial tribunals, and his success is so common that it seems a fortunate circumstance that any client can secure his services in their behalf. It therefore seems strange and wonderful that he can find time to even think on theological subjects, and much more so that he dare to write and publish in the magazines such skeptical articles as most writers would never dare to offer, but any article from his pen is so rich in substance, and so bold and defiant in its presentation, that they are both designed to and actually provoke discussion and controversy that are both interesting and instructive to the average reader. While he prudently refrains from giving the full definition of all his beliefs, he gives enough definition of his unbelief to place him outside of orthodoxy, and which besides these writings he finds time to annually deliver in the large cities to large audiences, which, but for the admission tickets being placed at a high figure, no edifice would contain the crowd that are eager to listen to his instructions; and none that are so fortunate as to secure a seat ever regret its cost, but repeat it at every subsequent opportunity. He has published several volumes, such as "The Gods, and other lectures," "Prose-poems and Selections," "Lectures Complete," "Mistakes of Moses," and several others, and these all pass through several editions and find a ready sale. He is now engaged in his annual missionary excursion, as he tells his audience, "to do what I can to civilize my country," and he does this by undermining both the Jewish and Christian's only hope, the "Inspired" Bible, and proving by its own contradictions and absurdities that it is the mere work of uninspired and lamentably fanatical and ignorant men. He goes further than Professor Briggs and Smith, who only dare doubt, for he not only dare doubt but deny, and prove his denials to be well

founded. As might be expected, this bold movement arouses the animosity of the various orders of priests and theologians, who are driven to the alternative to either defend the Bible, or by silence admit no defence is any longer possible, and such an admission is fatal to the priesthood, and besides encourages further and bolder attacks by more determined and stronger men, till an entire collapse of this infernal imposition will be inevitable.

Although it may be considered somewhat out of the ordinary practice for an author to insert in a writing such as the foregoing, a subject having but a slight similarity to the one that constitutes its main objects, I have thought it advisable to write a few thoughts about a topic which occupies at the present time much interest, more especially to the female portion of every community, namely: "The right to use the Elective Franchise," or in other words, "to vote." This is a branch of the subject of woman's rights beyond the original scope of that movement, so I will, in what I have to say, confine myself to that particular branch of the subject. While I am willing to concede the honesty and purity of the motives of those who are the most prominent in this movement, which, as I understand it, is to benefit the female portion of our fallen humanity, I nevertheless doubt the wisdom or the prospect of success of any such movement, as these misguided advocates seem to hope and even expect will succeed at some future time, not very far distant. I fear they are misled by a poor judgment when they expect either success, or benefit, if success is had, therefrom. While as yet none of our statesmen of any note have been attacked by this most loathsome political leprosy, and only a few half crazy fanatics have fallen victims to it, and these would not be at large if our already over crowded lunatic asylums were not cheated out of their appropriate occupants, but they should be, and they otherwise would be, shut up in high walled enclosures, where they could only injure one another, and make and destroy their own webs. No man of any note or consequence, as has been before observed, has ever given any countenance or strength to the ridiculous clamor raised by a few unamiable, wretched wives, and as many sour and embittered old maids, who have failed to become wives, whose absurd pretensions and bold, disgraceful conduct never fails to bring a blush of shame on every truly refined American woman. A suitable comparison to describe the movement to get equal suffrage in this state, by securing an amendment to our proposed new constitution, omitting the word male in prescribing the qualification for voters, is something like this: A half dozen grasshoppers under a fern bush can make a whole field in their vicinity ring with their persistent chink or noise, while a hundred or a thousand great cattle repose beneath the shade of the great trees,

chew the cud, and are silent. Do not imagine, therefore, you who make the most noise, are the only inhabitants of that field. By no means, for you are only a few shriveled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour. There is not the slightest reason to doubt that all the true women on this continent earnestly believe that the day that invests them with the elective franchise, if it ever should come, would be the blackest day in the annals of any local portion of humanity, for it would, if universal in this land of liberty, ring the death knell of modern civilization, national prosperity, social morality and domestic happiness, and it would consign the race to a night of degradation and horror, infinitely more horrible and appalling than would be a return to primeval barbarism, for then every exciting political contest would witness the revolting spectacle, greatly intensified, that is now a shame and disgrace to all our caucuses, by the addition of the loathsome presence of the lowest grade of female degradation and perversion, to counteract which would oblige the virtuous and intelligent, in self-defence, to be present, to neutralize and to counteract the ignorant and vicious of their sex, who, when they were unrestrained, would fraternize with their male companions of like instincts to themselves, and the result would be to elevate their own favorites to offices to which only the most virtuous and intelligent ought to aspire. These social outcasts have never known what it was to be anchored in the peaceful and blessed haven called home, and if man is ever insane enough to so mar the established social and domestic economy as to set woman afloat on the turbulent and roaring sea of politics, they will speedily become pitiable wrecks. Sooner than be a party to such an inversion of social order, I would welcome Turkish or even Mormon bondage, than to listen to the demoralizing tendencies of the doctrine of the equality of races, or even sexes. A few of our countrywomen are becoming dangerously learned, in their own estimation, at least, and the quality of their learning makes them troublesome, for these only half know, or mis-know. It is impossible for a man to hear from their lips or pens the word equality without a shudder, for there never was constructed a more untruthful statement than that all mankind are created or ever can become equal, or be equally entitled to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness; for the diversity is as great as the individuals are numerous, and in every department of the animal creation the male is in every way, when the conditions surrounding them are the same, superior to the female, physically, intellectually and morally, and there is no occupation, from the battle field through all grades of human activity, to the most delicate female employments, in which the male does not excel, till you come to the home and its management for the male, and a mother for

his children, then the female excels. Their intellectual characteristics never can be merged or destroyed without outraging the decrees of nature, and sapping the foundations of domestic harmony. The sexes have been endowed by nature with distinctive intellectual characteristics, and no true woman should ever barter womanly delicacy and refinement for an ambition to mix in these male disgraceful political squabbles. Erudition and effrontery have inherent connection, consequently a woman has an unquestionable right to improve and refine her mind to any possible extent that her ambition and condition will admit of, but in her anxiety to parade what she has gleaned she must not forget the decorum and modesty without which she is both repulsive and monstrous. It most certainly is reasonable that a truly refined woman, whose instincts are properly governed, should increase her use to her family and race by increasing her knowledge. A female pedant, who is coarse and boisterous, or ambitious of going to congress, or making stump speeches, would be quite as unwomanly and unlovely in character, if ever so highly educated or refined, as if she was wholly illiterate. It is not on account of their superior learning or ability, which affects this country, and no other, with these unfortunate abnormal developments, familiarly known by the title strong-minded women, but it is the misdirection of their energies, or in other words the one-sided partial nature of their education. A woman who, having a home, cannot be both contented and happy, busied with the ordinary womanly employments, but must fancy it is her mission or right to practice law, preach the gospel, or go out lecturing, or practice medicine, would be a troublesome, disagreeable personage, dethroned in her own realm, and, despised by their quondam subjects, roam as pitiable exiles, threatening to usurp man's kingdom, and monopolize his employments. When we scan the records of ancient history, we trace in every epoch the sovereigns of the home of ambitious rulers, statesmen and philosophers, and it is there clearly proved by illustrious examples that the borders of that feminine realm cannot be enlarged without subverting the great indispensable law of order. Woman has never in the past reigned by any right but concession, only at her home. If she is married, she has the right and always does, if she is worthy of it, live in the esteem and confidence of her husband and children, and not in the gilded and bedizened palaces of fashion, where thinly veiled vice and frivolity hold carnival, and in a sphere where social aspects monopolize and conduct, so as to be degrading to all the finer instincts. If she is single, in the love of parents, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. If orphaned, she can find sympathy, gratitude and usefulness among the poor and afflicted. If she is ambitious, let her become a musician, sculptor,



painter, writer, teacher, but in no case meddle with the scalpel or other anatomical pursuits, shun the rostrum in any cause; but if you feel you must serve the government, do it by neither prayers or augers, but by so instructing your sons that they can do this, and you be silent. A masculine, or more properly, a strong-minded woman is always a disagreeable person, under all circumstances, and would stir up quite as much strife and contention while using ungrammatical language as if she was a perfect philologist. It is not vanity to believe, or error to teach, that the intelligent, refined, modest and virtuous women of this country, while they never clamor for the elective franchise, so as to include the degraded, vile, vicious, ignorant rabble of their own sex, yet they always have been, are, and always will be the custodians of national and social purity, and the sole agents who ever can succeed in arresting the tide of demoralization now breaking in a fearful torrent over this land of liberty. These virtuous wives and daughters of free America must be relied on to do in the future as they have done in the past, smite by their influence and their example the impure and vicious of both sexes, and, if they cannot wholly abolish, at least purify the shrines at which these worship. Let her jealously and persistently contend for every woman's right which is by nature hers, and has been by custom always conceded to her sex, such as the right to be learned, wise, noble, useful in her limited sphere, the right to influence and to exalt the circle in which she moves, the right to reach the sanctified position of mistress of her own household, the right to modify her husband's, her son's, her brother's opinions, if they consider her competent to advise them or guide them, the right to make her children ornaments to their nation and race, and a crown of glory to posterity, the right to advise, to urge and entreat, the right to be all that the phrase "A noble woman" includes. These are rights in abundance, and hence they do not need the right to vote, to harangue from the hustings, to trail her heavenly born purity in and through the dust and mire of political strife, to ascend the rostrums where only statesmen should go, but where she may by her influence, in a modest, mild way, send her husband, her son, or her brother, but where she can never aspire to go without by such a process disgracing all her womanhood. It is a trite, and to some extent, may be, a true proverb, that "Those who rock the cradle where the human infant sleeps also rule the world." The tendency of this age is towards absolute equality, not only in civil rights, but also in sharing unearned wealth, which goes under the innocent and apparently harmless name of Socialism, or equality in all things, and this movement tends to undermine the golden throne where every true woman rules the members of her own family. Every reform whose tendency is to strike down the

social and political distinction of the sexes inevitably will, by that result, crush the pillars that support woman's throne, and this is one of the dangers to be apprehended from the influence, unless it can be neutralized or destroyed, from these unfortunate and deluded females, malcontents, who being unchecked and unrestrained by civil law, would, to carry out an insane idea of being injured or oppressed because they were denied the right to vote, inevitably destroy what semblance of liberty they now have, for it is one of the most dangerous situations a free people can ever be placed in, to advocate and permit universal, even male, suffrage for more than a numerical majority of those who cast the ballots to elect our rulers have no more intelligent perception of what this right carries with it, than so many cattle, for they are swayed by the designing knaves who are aspiring to positions of power and emolument, especially the latter, and unless this enormous and constantly increasing evil can be remedied in the near future, the liberties of the land are gone beyond recovery, and female suffrage, instead of, as they claim, tending to mitigate this evil, would only increase it, and thus cause a collapse of liberty and freedom. There has always been, under even monarchical nations, a few ambitious, discontented spinsters, who have so far unsexed themselves as to travel like Pandora over the land, if permitted, haranguing audiences, and these audiences, while patiently listening to them, and refraining from disturbing them, have always uniformly laughed at and despised them, and have pitied their insane clamor for influence and power in the national council; and while such women failed entirely to produce any good result, other more sensible women, such as Hannah More, in England, and Mrs. Stowe, in America, while refraining from expressing or harboring any desire for entering the political arena, and encountering men in debate, or by using the lecture platform, they sent forth instead those inimitable writings, that have done more to advance the cause of the rights of women than has all the eloquence of the strong-minded women of the whole world in all time. The ambition of a few women of any one or more of these United States to clamor for the elective franchise as a right, and from that as a starting point will persist in adding to this every right which they hope or intend will be secured by the use by them of this right, are but very little if at all conscious what conclusions societies which are composed of men only infer from such intemperate, unwomanly behavior. These mistaken creatures who, at the impulse of their own disposition, or the influence of example, are induced to despise or ignore the garb of modesty, and, instigated by a mere whim, so to lay aside the decent reserve of her sex, ought not to be surprised that men to whom she must apply, and on whose judgment she must depend, to secure any

further rights than she now has, are by their bold and defiant conduct to not only ignore and despise her, but also to defy her, and when she thus forsakes the innate guide of her youth, she leaves herself open to every shameful remark that men can devise to her damage, and by thus leveling the barrier raised by nature she exposes the stronghold of female virtue, and will find, when too late for recovery, that what modesty has abandoned cannot long be retained by honor or self-respect.

What a wonderfully strange being is a discontented, ambitious woman, who happens to live in free America, the only place in the whole world where a woman has any right but implicit, uncomplaining obedience to man, who not only assumes but actually exercises over her the most exact and instant obedience and compliance to his authority, and at the same time denies to her the right to even hope she has a soul, likewise any right to the disposition or destiny of her body or her earnings. In free America woman has first dared to ask or even hope for equality of civil rights, and this boldness in her was made possible for the reason that the founders of this government made it too free by proclaiming the false doctrine that all men are created free and equal. If it were true that all men are created free and equal, which they are not, for it is only infants who are born, not created, and they grow, some into men, if they live long enough, and the rest into women, that would furnish no reason why women ever arrive at equality with men in any branch of human acquirements or activities, and hence they have no right to aspire to men's capabilities. What great examples are found in history where women ever were great artists, inventors or statesmen, philosophers or generals, but, notwithstanding her inferiority, the generosity of man in this land of liberty has conferred on women as many rights as they need to render them contented and happy as a class. Of course, individuals can be found who are never satisfied unless they are masters, but the women of America, as a class, are ashamed and disgusted, the same as the men are, with the clamor and senseless agitation for the right of equal suffrage of a few, who have not been asked to agitate this question, but these monstrosities who go about getting up these monstrous petitions have volunteered to unsex themselves in their desire for notoriety. Of what avail is this movement now in progress, to procure and forward to the convention soon to assemble to revise and reconstruct the state constitution, an enormous petition of a million names, asking that the word "male" shall be omitted in the new constitution, where that word is used before the word citizen. Such a petition means just nothing, for no counter petition, asking it to be retained, is necessary, because the fact that many millions have refused to sign such a petition is a sufficient indication that no such change or omission

is desired, because the main and practically the only reason these petitioners have for demanding this change is, that women are taxed in a few instances, such as where they have real estate in their own name, and yet they are not represented in the legislature who enact the laws that govern them, and which they must respect and obey, when they have not consented to these laws. Let us examine and see how much truth or sincerity there is in this senseless clamor. If there was in our tax laws any unjust or unequal discrimination against the property of women, then a claim of the sort they refer to would have some weight or importance, but the reverse of this is the fact; her property, when it is merged in that of another person, as a husband, father, brother, or a trustee, shares alike with theirs the expense of government and protection, but when it is separate, much that was before taxed is exempt. A widow's dower is of course taxed as before, but she can vote in a case where money is to be raised for the purpose of education, at a school meeting, and as long as her property receives the protection from the state, it should continue to pay as before it always did for this protection, and the little imaginary change that women's vote would produce is as, and more, likely to be injurious to them as beneficial, mere moonshine, and hence men are justified in treating the whole subject as only worthy of ridicule and contempt, as the immense majority of women also do.

On the horizon of almost every mind that is at least partially enlightened, there arises sometimes the spectral clouds of doubt and disbelief. What is to be done with these doubts? The weak and timid turn away, and try to forget, or else shiver in uncertainty mixed with apprehension, but the bold and brave man fears not to close upon and seize the terror in the strong grip of investigation, to find out whether it be a fact or only a phantom, and the result usually is, it proves to be a friend in disguise. What a profoundly interesting study it is to watch and investigate those lives in which the tendency to religious disbelief has been conscientiously accepted and lived out. While it may and sometimes does, result different, from what we might reasonably expect, it in most cases gives those who have gone so far in unbelief as to reject such a conception of God as is revealed in the Bible, and even the Bible itself as a divine book, also a future life, and everything that a belief in such a life involves, still these persons live a pure life, and may have a lovable character morally, and as often do have as their opponents who believe all these things, and much more buoyancy of spirit, and every appearance of happiness more than is had by the average of those who look upon these unbelievers as monsters, whose final destiny it is fearful to contemplate. These unbelieving persons can die happy, and have put on



their tombstone this motto, or inscription: "I was not, afterwards I was conceived by my parents without the help or knowledge even of any such God as the Bible or Christianity reveals, I lived, enjoyed and suffered, and did more or less work; now I am not, and grieve not." It is well to remember that the human family is made up of individuals whose intellects differ, not only each from every other, but also from itself in different conditions, such as youth and age, which fact makes age more competent by reason of experience to form sound and satisfactory conclusions, and hence because it is an object for age to be sure that they mistake not as to their final destiny, when death closes both their animal and intellectual life simultaneously, for then it is too late to correct mistakes. Youth, when falsely instructed, as they usually are in a religious way, in consequence of such instruction, imbibe a multitude of false notions, which later in life may be corrected if instruction is of such a reverse nature that experience shall demonstrate that these first received notions are false, and hence the wisest course for the young, inexperienced person to take is to not anchor to an abstraction or unprovable assumption, but instead of doing so seek for more definite proof or demonstration; and this is to be done by finding some such sure foundations as is to be had from science, which, when rightly apprehended, leads to absolute knowledge, for any position in so important a subject as most people regard a future life to be, less than absolute knowledge, which is not so much as promised by any system of theology, is no better than mere guess work, and hence this is worthless trash when information is required on such a subject as eternity, the being of God, and the revelation contained in any so-called sacred book. These are all, as they have always been, mere myths, founded on priestcraft, jugglery and fraud, for an object easy to discover, and safe to discard as nothing better than sand or froth, of no use, but only pernicious and unspeakably vile, and the only consolation or fancied worth such a belief has ever had, as is contrived and palmed off on these honest, unsuspecting victims of priestcraft, is what can be derived from the remark, "It is well to die if there be Gods, and it is sad to live if there be no Gods." Joy and grief, or happiness and misery, in various degrees of alternation, always has been and must always continue to be the destiny of universal humanity, and this without any reference to any form of belief or disbelief, hence hope and fear also alternate in like proportions, and so long as this result is wholly unavoidable and inseparable from life in every individual, a complete dismissal of the whole subject, by an absolute disbelief in all kinds and degrees of religious frol, and an utter rejection of every form and degree of superstition, is far more rational, and hence more satisfactory. What a wonderful

mistake has been made by theologians and bigots in all past time, and the same mistake is being now made by the same class, in neglecting and overlooking science, and not only so, but in actually opposing and sneering at scientific men and all their discoveries, because they fancy, and rightly so in most cases, that if science is true the Bible and any form of religion resting on it is not true, for any feeble mind can detect many and glaring discrepancies, so that it becomes necessary for the priest, in his shallow and feeble manner, on account of his ignorance, to endeavor to reconcile one with the other. There is no exaggeration in such a statement as the following: That if one-tenth part of the time and expense that has been worse than wasted in the study and teaching of theology, by all grades of priests, in every form of religion, had been instead devoted to the study and teaching of only one branch of a real science, and that one named physiology, not by any means the greatest of the many that might be named, which treats of the structure of not only the bodies of men, but also incidentally of the mind, these priests and their pupils would have discovered that it is neither possible or desirable for any two individuals to either look alike, or think alike on any subject, or even for the same individual to agree with himself for any considerable length of time; therefore, what folly to expect or desire to introduce among men any permanent universal system, except it is founded on scientific demonstration, or capable of being so founded by further study and investigation; such a wild notion is not only monstrously visionary, but it is absolutely pernicious and dangerous; hence all this worry and speculation about eternity or a future life is not only a waste of time and energy for every individual who has either written or spoken on this subject, but also a waste of materials, and its agitation has been and is the cause of more insanity, suicides, poverty, bloody wars, personal hate, and contention between individuals, communities or nations, and the world as a whole, than all other causes combined, and to offset all this enormous misery has never produced any good result, either on individuals, communities or nations, notwithstanding a vast amount of priestly oratory is lyingly pretending that to this one agency of the gospel of Christ is due all the advance the race has ever made beyond the savage state. Various causes prevent success in putting in practice, to any but a very limited extent, any very radical alteration of the natural condition found among the various races of men, such as climate compelling each race reared in a given climate to adjust himself to his condition, and no other, giving his intellectual faculty such a bias that he can conceive of no other. Another cause is food; animal food and vegetable food will inevitably cause a corresponding variation in both the quantity and quality of the human brain, adapting

each class to such pursuits and occupations as they are capable to apply and understand; location, whether in cities or in the country, in heathen or civilized lands; conditions, whether rich or poor, isolated or having companions, facilities for acquiring useful knowledge; the amount, the quality and cultivation of the brain, in which resides the intellectual faculties; the amount and kind of labor or recreation; the personal habits, in the use or avoidance of stimulants, such as intoxicating beverages, opium, tobacco, or other narcotics; the excess or absence of sleep, and thousands more of variations, which are positively inseparable from human experience, make it not only impossible but undesirable to have any condition but constant change in every individual that ever has or that ever will live, and all this worry and useless effort to have uniformity on any but a scientific question has never yet produced any appreciable result, nor it never will; but just now a more aggressive spasm seems to have seized and made active and energetic some of these new religions, such as Christianity and Mahometanism, who have just sent missionaries to New York to try to civilize this benighted nation, and the youngest of them all, Mormonism, flourishes unhindered, and promises to be permanent and progressive. Christianity of the orthodox variety has so improved upon its predecessors as to alter the conditions of membership, to keep full the ranks that death makes in their numbers. The former requirement of a new birth, or regeneration, has been found too slow in its operation to fill up their vacant places, even with the aid of noted evangelists, who are experts in soul saving, and these experts are too few and costly to make it an object to employ them, so Christian Endeavor Societies have become the medium through which spurious converts are provided, to fill the gaps that death and desertion makes in the various churches, other than Episcopal and Roman Catholic; these already secure all the children at birth, and so fasten their grip upon all infants, through the humbug of baptism, that it is very rare that one escapes from them, so that these keep the number from diminishing, and perhaps slowly increasing their membership.

Another spurious Christian movement, which has not yet reached the dignity of being recognized as a distinct church, but is designated the Salvation Army, because it has adopted a military form in the names of its officers, as General, Colonel, Captain, etc., these have lately spread and become numerous in many Christian lands, and the principal leaders were once noted evangelists, but were thrown out of employment on account of some more or less heretical teachings, who started an independent crusade of soul saving among social outcasts and ex-criminals, and took the form of military discipline instead of any creed, requiring mere enlistment when they were soldiers of the cross, and so

mixed together the cross and flag that patriotism and piety were blended. These, taken as a whole, leaders and followers, are a wild, ignorant, half insane rabble, who imagine they, in common with other persons also have souls which they are anxious to have saved, and are taught that this is the only way, as this army will in time become numerous and strong, so that they can demolish the devil and all his works, and put their fictitious Christ on the throne, from which he has been kept by this devil. This promise, like every other Christians have made to entice followers, will fail.

In order to see the condition, in a social way, the human race would have been in universally, without ever having heard of any form of religion, and remaining entirely destitute of the slightest intimation or idea of any God or any future life, such a condition can be learned about by consulting a recent book of the "Voyage of the Ship Vega," by the celebrated scientist and navigator, Baron Nordenskiöld. This book is one of the four which he has lately published, in relation to this voyage to find the lost ship and crew named Jeannette, and is entitled, "A study of the tribe of Siberian Chook-chees, living in the extreme Northeast point of the continent of Asia." This tribe of savages, or at best barbarous human beings, number several thousands, just how many has not yet been ascertained, and they had never before the advent of these people been interfered with by any civilized people, and in fact they were never known to exist till this navigator, in his voyage to discover, if possible, what had been the fate of the lost company who had been sent out in the Jeannette, to try to find the northeast passage, found them, and has given to the world, in this book of two hundred octavo pages, a long and both interesting and instructive account concerning this strange people, and this book furnishes an answer to the question Christian priests always ask, when they encounter an unbeliever in debate: "What do you suppose would be the condition of the human race if entirely destitute of any form of religious instruction or belief?" This is the answer: These people are all contented and happy, without any form of government, without any kind of social restraint, unless public opinion is a restraint, without any religion, unless you call vague fetichism a religion, and without so much as even an idea of any kind of God, or hope or expectation of any future life, and yet in this condition is found a good degree of comfort, perfect security for life and property, unbounded hospitality and a strong feeling of sympathy and good will, generously extended to each other, and to any strangers who visit them. Their women are invariably well treated, and are freely consulted by the men with reference to matters of business, and may hold property in their own right. Within the family the most per-



fect unanimity prevails, so that a stranger visiting them never hears a cross word exchanged either between husband and wife, parents and children, or between the married pair who own the tent, and the unmarried who occasionally live in it. The children are never either scolded or chastised, and yet their behavior is perfect, so much so that their behavior in the tent is equal or superior to that of the best brought up children in European countries in their parlors. The men are without exception honest, good humored and obliging, and the criminal statistics of the tribe are impossible to get, for want of any crimes. Such a state of things is the ideal state of human society, in a realized form, in a state of nature, and is far beyond anything which Christianity, fully carried into practice, has ever produced, or is capable of. Such a revelation as this most certainly strikes a heavy blow at the root of all heathen reform societies and all missionary enterprise, and at the root of Christian civilization itself, and if any one doubts the truth of these statements, they can be abundantly established and verified, for it is only some fifteen years since these people were visited by a whole ship's crew, who wintered among them, and whose captain wrote this book wholly about these people, and it can be had at the book stores. Imagine, if you can, this state of things extended and become universal, as it is capable of, and would have been if priestly humbug and superstition could be entirely abolished and men allowed the full liberty to exist unmolested by their neighbors.

Perhaps it is not generally known that during the late World's Fair or Columbian Exposition, in Chicago, there was held what was named a Parliament of Religions, at which was represented by delegates nearly all forms of religion now extant in the world, such as the Jewish, Christian, Mahometan, Buddhist, Jains, and many others. One of the delegates sent there by the Jains has lingered in this country for the purpose of studying its institutions, etc., and for this purpose has traveled extensively, and lectured in many of the cities, to enlighten and instruct the people as to the merits of his form of religion, and claiming for it the greatest value as well as the greatest antiquity of any form now on earth, and in reality the parent of all others. He has disclosed much strange information respecting the customs and beliefs, which appear to its devotees of the first importance, and so well adapted to promote the best results to humanity, that its universal application would remove all the evils that afflict human society. Virchard R. Ghandi, in an interview, says: "One fact of which we are very proud is that no Jainite has ever committed murder. We eat no meat or fish and drink no wine; these are regarded as pollution. I am fifty years old, and I have never tasted meat in my life; my diet is the same in this country as in India, vege-

tables, nuts, fruits and cereals; half of the people of India can get only one meal a day, and the poverty of the lower classes can not be comprehended by Americans, so that absolute necessities here are luxuries in India. One general criticism I would like to make as to the money sent to India for missionary purposes. It is wasted, mostly because it is spent for evangelization, rather than in civilization and education. What does it avail to convert a lower caste Hindoo unless you educate him? Nothing at all, only makes him worse. You must give money for education instead of evangelization. Our religion is simply science, or scientific topics, as they affect the body and the mind, and these are closely interwoven with religious subjects." "Can you," I ask, "convert such a people to Christianity?" "Most assuredly not, and you ought not to wish to." This ends the interview. This is only one of many hundred similar religions entertained at various times by the human family, and each thinks his own superior, and to sum it all up, it amounts to this: In old age, after having pursued an inquiry which has always engaged the most earnest attention of all the human family, of all creeds and nations, it is not possible to come any nearer a solution of the following questions than they had at the beginning of the inquiry: Why am I, and why do I exist? I cannot live without wishing to know; therefore, since I cannot reach this knowledge, life in a true sense is impossible, and the whole question and answer amounts to this, and no more: In the infinitude of time, in the infinitude of matter, in the infinitude of space, a cell is formed, how or when or where I know not; it exists a moment, and bursts. That cell is I, and although this may seem a gloomy sophism, it nevertheless is the whole result of the supreme, constant labor of the mind of all humanity of all times, past, present and future, and can only be the result by all men's researches, and no good purpose would be served if such knowledge could be realized; but a vain hope is not to be cherished, no matter how consoling or how reasonable it may seem, but at the same time, in a certain sense, I may concede it to be both lawful and a duty for a person, if one has hopes, to guard against any influence that may interfere with such hopes, but only on the clearly ascertained condition that such hopes are well founded. The priest will tell you it is innate to all humanity to desire and to have a more or less extensive apprehension of some religion. I deny this, and say that heredity alone can explain the cause, and science can prove that it was not so in the primitive man any more than it is in other animals; therefore, what an unspeakable outrage it is to attack any impressible mind, whether old or young, such as infants have at the outset in high civilizations, and savages have in mature age, and give it any bias towards any science even, but an intensely greater outrage to give them

any religious bias, for no part of such teaching has more than an empiric or ethical value, being incapable of any proof; but still it may for some minds have an imperceptible value as a means of culture, for all these intricate subjects should be kept in reserve for the mature, cultivated intellects to grapple with, later in life, free from bias, or being filled with impressions less than half true, and more than half false. The discoveries constantly being made by scientists in various directions, and the inventions of non-religious men, such as the steam engine, the power printing press, the electric motor and telegraph, the photograph, and thousands of others of less value, are all made by men not only outside and independent of religious influence, but are directly hostile to such influence, and hence in countries where Christianity and the Bible has never been heard of, a higher civilization can be shown, and a purer state of morals, than any Christian land has ever produced, or that is capable of producing by that influence alone. It would be impossible to find a place among savages where such revolting crimes are found in such prodigious numbers as in this free America, and the great majority of the worst are committed by hypocritical church members, much more often Roman Catholics than any others, and the horrible vices not strictly criminal, such as fornication, adultery, lying, adulteration of food and drink, intemperance, and many others like them, are so common as to attract but little notice. That enormous vice of gambling is unknown among any religious men except Christians, and those among whom Christians have gone.

It is perfectly safe to assume that if the natural instinct of implicit confidence of an inferior or undeveloped intellect had never been so far imposed upon, by the introduction of any form of supernatural or superstitious deception, as to cause doubt to lead to investigation, and investigation to require absolute proof, credulity would still be everywhere the universal condition of the human race. But as skepticism is at present demanding of absurdity adequate proof, and as no proof is forthcoming, candor requires the instant rejection of all such absurdity, as, for instance, is the case when miracles are introduced to substantiate an impossible statement, for a miracle, if any such thing could be produced, is simply the violation of established and inviolable natural laws by suspending their operation for the time being, without any valid reason why such suspension was necessary. This was never actually done, for it would be just as impossible for an infinite being, who alone could or would establish such laws, to violate his own laws, as it would be for a finite being to instinctively know and observe without deviation such infinite law, if it could be made evident by proof that the being who established natural law had an actual existence. The introduction of the



supernatural by the imposters who first invented that absurdity, and its propagation by subsequent impostors, has caused all the human family, by these impostors taking possession of the children in all ages and countries, to become so thoroughly impressed by the reality of the unreal supernatural, that now science finds it very difficult, and in most cases impossible, to dislodge it, and the religious element always opposes science if it seems to conflict with the supernatural; hence skepticism has to fight not only an open but an imaginary foe, which the Bible or sacred book of all religions hold forth, and offers us as proof, and which we reject as spurious and of no value, any more than to be of use to any imposition, which this sacred book, by allowing its unproved assumptions the same or greater force than demonstration, when not made by means of divine revelation, however conclusive, can overcome. This view is the worst form of bigotry, and, when persisted in, makes a fanatic of its victim, and thus closes his mental faculty so as to make him incapable of using it to any good purpose.

Such a result is reached when any creed or religious constitution is made by a high authority of ecclesiastics, and used as a basis on which to found any dogma or doctrine which requires the assent of any candidate for the office of a priest or minister of any branch of church organization, and is also in a modified form assented to before the applicant for membership to any of these bodies called churches is admitted, and the reasoning faculty is thereby closed, so as to forever prevent investigation. It has always been the peculiarity of orthodox Christianity that those who are selected and ordained as preachers, to unfold its mysteries and its value as an addition to mere morality, to parade and make very prominent the consolation it affords on the death bed, when the soul, on leaving the body, would otherwise be obliged to go alone over the river of Jordan, which signifies the passage from earth to glory beyond the grave, as the literal passing over the river that formed the boundary between the Arabian desert and the land of Canaan had to be passed by the Israelites, before Canaan could be reached, forgetting that the figure there sought to be made to apply has not the slightest parallel; for the first business of the military body which went over that river, dry shod, necessitating a miracle to be wrought to enable them to do so, which ought to be sufficient to cause the whole story to be unhesitatingly rejected as a lie, not only this, but there was a continual struggle between the invaders of this country and its former occupants, which lasted as long as that rascally set of invaders were able to fight, and in the end they never were masters of but a small province called Judea, and that was eventually taken from them by the Romans, and they were driven out as they deserved to be. If that is to be the type of those



who go from earth to heaven, very few will care to make much preparation. This, to most people who come under the priestly influence and instruction, and who never investigate or think for themselves, seems to be a plausible reason, and one which, if there was any way to test its value, ought to be sufficient to cause universal acceptance; but inasmuch as nothing has been ascertained on that subject, and never will be, but conjecture only, and as the Jew, the infidel, the atheist, and in fact every form of skepticism, has in the past furnished as many or more specimens of heroic fortitude and courage when in immediate prospect of death, in proportion to the relative number, this preparation is in itself of no value, and is not peculiar to any form of religious belief, and ought not to have any influence to cause any one to rely upon it as any preparation to die peacefully. There are so many circumstances attending and preceding the close of every adult or mature life, that no uniformity of mental or bodily suffering is possible, and none of the expressions that are used by any individual at that time are of the least importance, whether of hope or despair; they are simply the natural result of false instruction, and are as unreliable as any other form of mental disease, for the mind inevitably shares whatever suffering and weakness which at that time afflicts and weakens the body, and as far as any one at present knows, or in the future ever will know, dies with the body, the same as is universally admitted in all Christian countries is the case with all the various grades and species of the lower animals. Science makes no distinction; the same immutable or unchangeable law of nature reduces every form of animal and also of vegetable life to the elements from which they were derived, and no exception to that destiny has ever been and none can ever be made in favor of the human animal, and no good or sufficient reason has ever been shown and none ever will be shown why any law of nature should be suspended or interrupted in his behalf; it is only assumption, without even a shadow of probable truth to give it vitality.

It is perfectly safe and proper to assume that, if the natural instinct of implicit confidence of an inferior or undeveloped intellect had never been so far imposed upon, by the introduction of any form of supernatural or of superstitious deception, as to cause doubt to lead to investigation, and investigation require absolute proof, credulity would still be everywhere the universal condition of the human race. But as skepticism is at present, as far as the comparatively small number which skeptics are in proportion to the whole number who are given over to credulity, demanding of absurdity adequate proof, and as no proof is furnished, candor requires the immediate rejection of all such absurdity, as is the case when miracles are introduced, to substantiate or to make seem

probable an otherwise impossible statement; for a miracle is simply the reverse or unnatural operation of nature's laws, by suspending its operation for the time being, without giving any valid reason for such suspension, or why it was necessary. This never was actually done, for it would be just as impossible for an infinite being to violate his own law as it would be for a finite being to instinctively, at the beginning of his existence, know and obey such law, if it could be made evident by satisfactory proof that the being who established natural law had an actual existence. The introduction of the supernatural by the set of impostors who first invented that absurdity, which for many ages before the date given as the period when the human race began to live, as is held by the Christian to be only some six thousand years ago, was in full operation, and has been propagated by all subsequent impostors, and is now being fortified by the present race of religious impostors, has caused the human family, by these several successive generations of impostors getting possession of the children, and of those who, being of adult age, are still intellectual children, as savages or barbarous nations are in that condition until civilized by the introduction and the comprehension of science, art and commerce, and in all countries, in all ages, to become so thoroughly impressed by its reality that science and art find it nearly impossible to overcome and dislodge it, for the religious element of any community always opposes science and discourages learning if it conflicts with the supernatural; hence skepticism has to fight and overcome not only an open but an imaginary foe, which the sacred books, emanating from the impostors who were the founders of all religions, have invented, and were written by, as they assert, divine inspiration and direction, holds up and offers its votaries as proof of its genuineness and value, and which all skeptics reject as spurious and pernicious. The intolerance of the Christian bigot is more intense and hateful than that of any other form of belief, whether religious or secular, and the reason of such implacable hatred of those who dare to question any of their unfounded assumptions is because no other in their estimation is genuine, and the genuine alone deserves to subsist, and will ultimately exterminate and supersede the spurious, for his vanity has been stimulated by the declaration of the impostor who founded the system to which he belongs, telling him in so many words he is the salt of the earth and the light of the world in all time. The Christian church is indebted to science for being able to overthrow and abolish all miracles, as all the Christian teachers now say the day of miracles is past when asked why miracles are not now had, and these discoveries of scientific men have always been made by men outside of the church, and the hierarchy of the church have always and do now oppose every discovery in

science that is in seeming conflict with what they term revelation or inspiration till in spite of their opposition it gets sufficient support to be able to stand alone, and the church then pretends to discover that science and revelation harmonize. The absurd statements recorded in the first chapter of Genesis were received without question till geology had so far examined the structure of the earth that more time was required than was there allowed when ascertained facts would require millions of ages to complete the formation of the first strata of rocks and a like period for each subsequent formation and now we find these defenders of inspiration admitting days to mean indefinite periods and therefore science and revelation harmonize. This is a weak admission but weak as it is has been forced upon an unwilling bigoted set of religious impostors to partly satisfy a credulous and confiding set of their dupes who otherwise might become too skeptical for further control and deception to satisfy. Skepticism is never met with in weak minds, for they are too indolent to make sufficient investigation or examination of any proposition requiring any extended mental effort, to be able to arrive at any definite conclusion, and too indifferent to care what conclusion is reached. It is the weak minds of any community who are influenced in favor of any form of religious imposition that the hypocritical impostor, who is himself too shrewd to believe any portion of the absurd statements he makes, and the still more absurd and silly proofs he offers to gain adherents and pretend to earn his salary, that constitute the greater part of the converts to any or all forms of religious belief. If there are any strong ones among them, they are only hypocrites, to aid and abet the imposition and share in the spoils to be extracted from the dupes. As a familiar example, the skeptic can cite the one started in recent times by that insignificant impostor, Joe Smith, who alone actually originated the Mormon delusion, which has far exceeded the Christian, considering the short period which has witnessed its beginning and development into an organized power, sufficient to cause national solicitude as to its future management, and a well grounded apprehension that it will outlive Christianity itself. Another recent humbug of the second advent of Christ, who never even has been shown to have made a first advent, has disturbed and distracted all that portion of the church outside of the Roman Catholic portion of that body, and is likely to remain a permanent source of discord and division, for the fact of such reappearance is admitted, but the only dispute is as to the time of such second advent, and this false and foolish imposition has extended to the ignorant savages of the border of the most Christian nation of the world, so that much bloodshed has been the result of an attempt to dislodge this wicked imposition, and much more will yet be required, for religious

fanaticism dies hard, for these weak minds are in strong bodies, and are full of superstition, which is easy to stimulate, but hard to subdue.

Another still more foolish and wild outbreak of superstitious fanaticism, and of the most recent beginning, is the Salvation Army, who are aggressive and numerous, and although directed and managed by the impostor who contrived this scheme to endeavor to include the outcast portion of the community, who were to be reached by out door labor, and whose mental ability was of the lowest order, still, under the emotional excitement which could be brought into use by a magnetic orator, who had nothing to say but to relate an imaginary experience of himself or herself, for both sexes preach without previous preparation, so as to save an equal number of the two sexes, and thus to propagate and continue the imposition and increase the number by future births. Many more similar examples might be cited, but enough is revealed to show that any foolish and weak imposition has always found sufficient fools to begin any imposition, and in nearly every case to make it permanent, when ignorance united to superstition has been allowed to have undisputed sway. The exceptions, embracing some better class of mental ability, who, if left without any religious bias till adult age, would not without convincing proof accept any attempted imposition, are not so left, but have been so early and thoroughly instructed, that on reaching maturity, if this instruction has been continued scarcely ever allow one doubt to cloud their former belief, but seek to continually fortify and strengthen their early impressions, not daring to let go of the anchor of faith for fear of shipwreck on the, to them, treacherous sea of unbelief, because such a process involves less mental effort and gives sufficient satisfaction, and every populous community can furnish the required number of flat heads to give at least a feeble support to the representative of one or more sects of Christian ministers, and in some cases a liberal support, when the individual so employed is able to make a suitable impression and give satisfaction. Skepticism in general is mere doubt or unbelief in any proposition which, in the way it is presented to the mature mind, seems to require proof, because without such proof it is inadmissible; hence, when any statement is made claiming to emanate from a divine source, through a human medium, for the instruction or information of other human or intelligent beings, who are seeking this instruction, it is required that it be of such a probable or possible kind, and so in conformity with the operation of nature's laws, as are comprehended and understood by the beings who are seeking this instruction, that they can understand and receive it, or else it is not only their duty, but they are obliged to reject it. Of this description are many of the statements of both the old and new testament scriptures; they are in



direct conflict and antagonism with the known and easily demonstrated and self-evident natural laws, and no one at the present stage of mental development is ignorant enough or credulous enough to assign any other reason for such statements than that they are miracles performed by the author of nature's laws. It is therefore the easiest way out of any difficult or absurd statement for a weak mind to believe, on an unsupported assertion of an unknown writer, that this universe and all it contains was made out of nothing in six days, and if it had been six seconds it would be no more incredible than it is, than to examine the teachings of science, which prove it to be a lie.

It is much easier to believe and admit the statement that the sun and moon stood still for six hours, to permit a horrible slaughter of thousands of innocent human beings, to gratify the brutal savagery of a Jewish general, than it is to estimate what would be the inevitable result of a solid body, moving in a rotary direction at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, when both the earth and all its inhabitants would be instantly annihilated, and the whole solar system would tumble into ruin. It is easier to believe that the prophet, so called Elijah, went to heaven in a chariot of fire on the wings of a whirlwind, after the wantonly murdering in cold blood four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, than to believe he went to hell, as he richly deserved. It is easier to believe another renegade prophet, so called by the name of Jonah, could have remained in the whale, without air or food, and that the whale could not digest such a morsel, and delivered him up alive and well after trying for three days and nights to digest and assimilate him, than it is to ascertain by the aid of ascertained facts, from the discoveries of the fact by thousands of witnesses, who have asserted that the throat of the whale would not permit the passage of any food that was not previously thoroughly masticated. It is also much easier to admit the security of another humbug of a prophet, called Daniel, when put into a den of wild lions, and also admit that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego could live and thrive when in a furnace that was seven times as hot as it would require to melt cast iron, than it is to look for the proof to refute such absurd lies.

And when we get tired of these old testament lies, what better success do we meet with in the new testament? The very first few verses introduce us to the biggest lie thus far found, but as we proceed we shall find, if possible, still larger ones. The birth of a man child, without human father, by a virgin, without destroying the proof of virginity which every Jew husband is entitled to find present at marriage. Every adult mind ought to at once refuse to read another word, but close and destroy a book containing such a miserable lie as this, but as curiosity

is stimulated to watch the career of such a monstrosity, we lose sight of him entirely, till, when twelve years of age, he attempts to elude his parents and go off by himself, but he is not permitted to do this, and is recovered and kept out of sight for eighteen years more, when he is of age, and can legally shirk for himself, which he proceeds to do, and we next find him persuading a cousin of his, about his age, who also had left his parents, to administer to him the rite of Baptism, for what purpose no one has ever tried to explain, for he had, at the eighth day of infancy, been circumcised, to make him a genuine Jew by the law of Moses.

The science of astronomy was so little understood and so slightly developed when the sacred books, so called, were written, that the writers thereof, although pretending that they were divinely instructed as to the how and what to write, made so many mistakes with the subject as to excite derision among modern astronomers. One of these mistakes was that the earth, including land and water, was flat and stationary, and all heavenly bodies except the sun and moon were also stationary. This imperfect knowledge caused the mistake of the flood to seem probable, and the consequent destruction of all living animals who lived on its surface, and also the accompanying story of the ark and its contents, and also the construction of the tower of Babel, and the origin of all the various languages now existing, and many more like these, so that we must conclude that these absurd and foolish stories are lies, or the discoveries of science that can be proved true are lies. The skeptic is not long in deciding which to choose. It is not the unreasonable demand of the skeptic of all grades, to require any statement that is in conflict with established and the hitherto universally observed natural way such events have so far always occurred, such as the account of the birth of the individual who it is asserted by the Christian was the founder of his system of religion, which is so monstrously in conflict with universal human experience, and also in all forms of propagation of all grades of animal life, that such an improbable and absolutely impossible story should be distinctly and unmistakably proved, beyond the possibility of doubt, instead of the mere unsupported statement of an obscure and unknown individual, of whose existence even no proof is to be found, and it is a disgraceful admission that there has been found enough credulity, stupidity and ignorance to allow such a downright lie to become so firmly established, in the nearly two thousand years that has elapsed since this lie was started, that a long time will be required to prove that it is a lie to the satisfaction of the flat skulls who have been fools enough to so far refuse to inquire as to its probable truth, for as long as it remains strong enough to attract ability enough to success-

fully defend it from its foes, by furnishing the money on which this ability is able to subsist and fatten, it will defy such weak attempts as have been made to overcome and destroy it, as skeptics are prevented to more than privately entertain any hostility, on account of the unfavorable impression such hostility, openly expressed, would have on them by their associates in the several communities among which they reside, and to which they look for patronage, if in any kind of mercantile business, or on account of social intercourse. Every one who has been bold enough to openly oppose any generally admitted statements, that are embodied in the creeds of any given orthodox denomination among whom he resides, and more especially if he has once belonged to any such denomination, has been made to feel and realize the displeasure of those who were formerly his associates and customers, by their withdrawing from him their patronage, and avoiding his company, for no other reason than a wish to punish him for doing what he was obliged to do, or else act the part of hypocrite, in consequence of having received increased light and knowledge on a certain subject, which before had been wanting, and which would also cause those who still adhere to former erroneous beliefs to change their own, if they would permit such light to shine. This hesitation to outwardly avow changed beliefs is the principal cause of all the hypocrisy every where to be met with, in every organized society of Christians and other religious fanatics, and also is the principal cause of the indifference so universally manifested among those whose duty it is to be both zealous and liberal to not only keep alive the church to which he belongs, but to secure its prosperity, and widen and strengthen its influence, instead of (as is everywhere apparent) permitting it to languish and finally perish for want of support. All of this, to those who are honest and sincere in their estimation of the value of Christian instruction, deplorable result, is caused by skepticism, and the skepticism is itself caused by mature minds, by study and reflection, becoming enlightened on any given subject, by proof to them sufficient to cause the abandoning such previous beliefs. With all due respect for those who would, on account of their honesty or sincerity, be caused a degree of uneasiness in proportion to the strength of their hope of happiness in a future life, the skeptic usually refrains to cause such uneasiness, when he is not prepared to offer them anything of equal value in exchange for such loss of their unfounded hope; but, on the contrary, when he meets with those who have no such hope, but are tormented by an unfounded fear of future despair and misery, he seeks to remove such fear, and in its place substitute annihilation (or the death of the soul with the body), in its place, and offer such proofs as were sufficient in his own case to remove such



fear, and to establish in the mind of this person, having this fear, the far more comfortable and desirable result, and the same proof that causes this latter result is also admissible to cause the former. It surely would cause the fond mother of a wayward and abandoned son, who had died without any hope of heaven, or a son who had lost a mother or father under the same conditions, to fail to meet them on the other side of the grave not only, but to also witness their undying bodies, containing the same polluted soul, unwashed in the blood of Christ, in the condition the rich man was described to be in in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, enough anguish to materially diminish their imaginary happiness, if not entirely destroy it; and it, on the other hand, would intensify the misery of the lost friend to witness the happiness of the friend saved, and the only way that such a deplorable result could be avoided is to abolish both, and give nothing in exchange, which is far preferable, and when the Bible is abolished that teaches such abominable and unfounded doctrines, and the unmitigated set of rascals who assume to instruct the people, called priests, are made to seek other occupations more respectable than the calling they now follow, future generations will have neither this unfounded and worthless hope of heaven, or this damnable fear of hell. These excessively sensitive Christian bigots, who are so confident that they alone of all the human race have the only form of religion that is of any value, and who are so easily disturbed when any one in their presence is bold enough to question any of their unfounded hopes, or suggest that any other belief than the one they have entertained, without the shadow of a reason why they have or do entertain it, except that they have been so instructed, are the most outrageously determined to force their unfounded, worthless belief upon the whole human race, unasked and unwished for, and are not satisfied to merely organize churches and build splendid edifices in which to worship and adore this imaginary divinity, at a vast expense, which they force the people over whom they rule to give the money, but they also force them to maintain in luxury a vast army of useless ministers to propagate a mere humbug and delusion, at another vast outlay, which they cannot afford to do, but they also invade and seek to overthrow, and to, if possible, destroy every other people's religion, and would take away and demolish all the pious hopes and beliefs, that are as sacred and valuable to these people from whom the Christian missionary would take such hope and belief, and give nothing in its stead any more consistent or any better than he always had, but on the other hand he would fill him with such an unfounded fear of the torments of an imaginary hell, as the alternative, if he should be obstinate enough to reject this offer of salvation, through a redeemer of which this



missionary pretends to be the agent. All this is an outrage as great and greater than for a skeptic to produce a feeling of discomfort, by weakening the Christian's hope of heaven. These people, among whom the Christian missionaries go uninvited, have their own sacred books, as precious to them as the Christian's Bible is to him. They have their religious teachers, equivalent to the Christian's priests; they have their sacred edifices or temples, more beautiful and costly than any the Christian can produce, and they are as well satisfied with their future prospects as is any Christian with his, and it is an outrage of unspeakable meanness to send a lot of flat skulled missionaries among them to take from them the satisfactory hope they have, not only, but also rob them of all they can possibly extort in money, and in return give nothing, but, in addition to their high-handed robbery, create social discord and contention that such religious disputes always cause, and all this is justified in a pretended solicitude for the good of the souls of those who, if they have any souls at all, are as capable of deciding its destiny beyond this life as are those who volunteer to instruct them. This whole missionary outrageous scheme is only a financial one, and originated in an unfounded assumption, based on a spurious passage in the new testament, and found in the last chapter of the gospel of Mark, from the ninth verse to the end of the chapter, which has been added by the impostors who invented this missionary scheme, and is not found in any manuscript copies, but is printed in brackets in the late new version revised at Oxford. This manufactured scripture also contains all the authority the Baptist sect can show for their humbug of adult baptism by immersion, and this is also omitted in another place where it was in the old version. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." The lamentable want of success, to secure the necessary number of recruits to make good the losses occasioned by death and apostacy, from that portion of the church that required a man to be born again, or those who had arrived at mature age, caused the managers to change the plan of the Sunday-school, which, when it was first invented, was designed merely to instruct children of the poor, who were employed in factories during the week, and consequently had no chance to learn to read or write, to give such an opportunity to learn merely secular knowledge, and the secular instruction was abolished and religious instruction was substituted. The undeveloped and impressionable mental structure of children causes them to receive without hesitation or doubt what the teacher is capable to impart, and the teacher adapts the instruction to the capacity of the child, reference being had to the age and endowments of the pupil, grades established and teachers

selected by a competent superintendent, who furnishes such teachers with selected topics, and sees that the teachers are diligent, punctual in attendance, faithful to instruct, and when the young man or young woman emerges or graduates from such a discipline one step only is requisite to qualify him or her for membership, and that is a sham conversion or regeneration, and a few crocodile tears, and they are admitted to fill vacant places, and keep the number from diminishing, and up to this time this victim has never been permitted to exercise any faculty but credulity, and are no better than the average of those among whom they live, who have never used any of these advantages. This ingenious scheme is made all the more successful by the introduction of music, to give emotional expression to a class of hymns, adapted by the author of these hymns to embody in their structure all the ground work of the various orthodox creeds, and many of the peculiar doctrines of each separate sect, so as to secure their sale among all shades of Christians except Catholics, which are not admitted by the orthodox to be entitled to that name, but are only mere pagans. All this is the result of foresight and experience, and in recent years there is the addition of a class of specialists made to the former merely pastoral work, under the title of evangelists, who secure by a sort of gift which they have gradually acquired, by practice upon some special theme, which qualifies them for employment to cause the hesitating penitent to come to a decision and unite with the church. No one has any right to find fault with the foregoing process, if it was an honest endeavor on the part of the managers and leaders to save the souls of their fellow men; but when it is only done as a device to create a supply from which to extort funds to keep alive an organization that ought to never have had any life, and continue a rotten system of fraud and deception, and well known to be such by the hypocritical founders of these various false systems, then the skeptic is in duty bound, as far as in his power, to neutralize these underhanded proceedings, and prevent the young and unsuspecting from becoming the dupes of such a rascally system. The Catholic priests are sagacious enough to prohibit the reading of the Bible by the common people, or, if not actually prohibited, make it so difficult as to be practically impossible, and for a very obvious reason: to prevent them from reading such impossible statements that defy belief, and would be almost sure to cause many of them to be skeptical, and that result is always important to prevent.

If any person of ordinary common sense were to read such a story as is recorded in the book of Jonah, or in fact all the book of Jonah (for the story concerning the whale is no more absurd than all the rest of it), they would be obliged, without the least hesitation to pronounce it not

only a lie, but a stupidly foolish one, for it violates all the natural laws relating to respiration, mastication, digestion and assimilation, that it is surprising that the writer of such trash could so far presume on credulity and ignorance enough to believe any portion of it, much less rely upon its precise literal accuracy as being divinely inspired, and cause it to be transmitted to our times and used as a revelation from God, and not only so, but that Christ, the son of God, who ought to have certainly known that it was a lie, should be made to say by the evangelist who wrote his life, that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly so must the son of man be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth," when in fact, according to the same writer, he was only one day and two nights in that condition. There is another similar impossible lie in the book of Daniel; in fact, like the book of Jonah, it is all a lie, and needs no refutation, and would be an insult to the intelligence of a savage to expect him to listen for a moment to such a collection of miserable twaddle. Many more such impossible stories are related in the old testament scriptures, and the new testament is almost wholly composed of just such stories, that not only lack probability but possibility; for example, the parable or graphic story of the rich Dives in hell, and the poor Lazarus in heaven, in sight and hearing, carrying on a conversation and argument, the organs of sight, hearing, speech and intellect in perfect working order, but the instinct of sympathy or sorrow in the happy person was extinct, so that no pity was felt, and no disposition to mitigate the confessedly undeserved punishment which this rich man was made to suffer, for it is nowhere asserted of him, or even so much as hinted, that any injustice or any kind of crime was found or given as a reason why he should not be in heaven, as well as for his opposite, the poor man. Is it any wonder that any reasonable being, having intelligence enough to understand the most simple subject, should reject such nonsense? No! the wonder is that it is not universally rejected, as it deserves to be, and as it soon will be; but it must be conceded and admitted that there has been erected on this wonderfully foolish and absurd book, the Bible, one of the strongest forms of religious impositions the world can produce, and has caused more woe and misery to the human race who have come under its influence than all other causes combined, and is yet destined, before it can be destroyed by the progress of intelligence and the further revelations of science, to perpetuate for a long time to come more of its pernicious fruits.

There is constantly a large number of unemployed ministers, who are so weak in their endowments that no church will employ them, and there is always a large number of newly organized mission churches,

who are too poor to pay for talent, and these weak ministers go to an agency or bureau, or, as it would be more proper to call it, an employment office, and are sent on trial to these weak churches, and a sum of one or two hundred dollars donated to enable such weak, poor church to employ them, and keep them and their families from starvation. The belief in a personal God, and his opponent, a personal devil, which the priesthood of every form of religious belief have invented, is the one huge superstition and the great central lie of the world, the parent of all the religious superstitions of mankind, in all countries and all ages, around which all the darkening beliefs of mankind have clustered, and upon which they have depended for their life. This personal creator, they assert, and by weak arguments attempt to prove, created a vast universe of matter out of nothing, or in other words he is the great weaver who has done all this weaving of the vast creation in the looms of nature. One, and perhaps the main argument they depend upon to prove this position, is the concurrent testimony of the world, or the unity among mankind, as regards a belief in a God and the immortality of man, erroneously supposing that a uniformity of belief of many millions of simpletons would have the slightest effect in making true that which in and of itself is not true. Another of these false arguments is, there is thought in the universal human race not their own, and the inference, they say, is, there can be no thought without a thinker, and that thinker is a person; some one also made righteousness; all nature is full of the evidences of thought and righteousness, and therefore that thinker is God. While it may be admitted that thought or design pertains to the universe, still no thought can exist save in the matter and forces of which the universe is composed, and these forces must be suitably organized in animal bodies, including the digestive, the circulatory, the brain, and the whole nervous apparatus, before any thinking is possible. Why not as well say that all nature is bursting or full of the evidences of eyesight, and that where there is seeing there must be a seer, and that seer is God. It is just as reasonable to believe in and talk about a grand central eyesight, a grand gushing fountain of hearing, or tasting, or feelings, as of a grand bursting thought, and also name these God. These fanatical priests are determined not to see, or, if they see, not to admit, that all these processes of nature simply are more or less developed in every form of animal life. The brain no more proves the existence of a personal God or deity than does the eye, the ear, the limbs, or any part of the animal structure. In the grand economy of nature all these natural phenomena take place unavoidably, in obedience to its laws, consequently they contain no argument whatever by which to prove the existence of any God, or even the necessity



of such an existence, and therefore the atheist is not a fool, as these shallow reasoners would like to have their dupes believe, for he asserts that these priests are knaves as well as fools; for the paltry proceeds which they receive they are willing to perpetuate, and if need be, invent, any absurdity, and call it divine revelation, and the foolish dupes are not able to resist these monstrous priestly impositions. These shallow reasoners proclaim and insist that the process of weaving, by which they mean the creative energy necessary to produce, that a weaver or creator is necessary to stand back of all the processes of nature, and personally direct every process that takes place. What a foolishly weak argument! If a weaver was powerful enough to create from nothing such a universe as is in existence, why did he not make it so grand and perfect that all its operations would be performed without his presence being necessary, to throw the shuttle in every instance; for if it is necessary in a single instance, it is in every instance. A thousand times "No." Nature unassisted is perfectly able to perform every act that transpires, without the aid of any superintendent, or weaver, or God. With nature all things are equally simple. It is no more for nature to evolve from a nebulous mist a world or planet, and set it in motion in exact harmony with other previously existing worlds, around its common centre, in its prescribed orbit or path, than it is to cause water to run down hill, or to assume a level position if obstacles prevent its dispersion, or the sun to produce light by its currents or rays striking the atmosphere that envelopes all worlds, and by that means weaving vegetable, animal and mineral cells, thus throwing the weaving shuttle in all cases. Nature is equal to every emergency. All her operations are in obedience to her unalterable laws, and everything is forced to take place precisely as it does, because under all the circumstances it cannot be otherwise than as it is. There is no chance or happen in the matter. Every effect requires a cause, and every cause must produce its only results, only when the conditions are favorable. These causes and effects are strictly natural; there are none others. Such a thing as a supernatural cause or a supernatural effect never existed and never can. Matter and force are always present, and there is not a possibility that can arise where law and causes are not present to govern results. Millions of men, in every country, in every stage of human progress, have imagined them, but no man has ever been or ever will be able to point out a supernatural cause or a supernatural effect, and if by any process of reasoning it can be shown that there is a being capable of creating such a grand and glorious machine, or vehicle, as nature, producing all matter and force from nothing, and he is unable to set it in motion, so it will run itself, and perform all there is for it to do without his standing by to turn the

crank, or to throw the shuttle, as the weaver does, he stands confessed and convicted of inability on his part to make a perfect machine, for a machine that cannot run indefinitely, without the maker standing by, either to turn the crank, to tighten the screws, to push when hard work is to be performed, and to keep it at all times from going to smash, is not a perfect mechanic or machine builder. He cannot be a being of infinite power and knowledge, or he could make a machine that would run itself eternally. The real and only fact is, nature comprises or includes all matter, all force, all motion, all power, all intelligence, all possibilities. She is eternally independent of all superintendents, designers, directors, governors, conductors, managers, or crank turners, and there is no more wicked or malicious falsehood and blasphemy than to deny nature her grandeur and power, and give it to an imaginary non-entity by the name of God, and thus make him a little, contemptible, one-horse crank turner, to keep this machinery in motion. The occupation of the theologian would be gone, and they are shrewd enough to see that result, the moment they admit that a personal God is not previous and above nature, and is constantly necessary to instruct and superintend all her work, for all this absurd business of God making, inventing weavers or shuttle throwers, to aid nature, and attend to all the events which transpire in the universe, is what is called theology, or science of God, the most false and utterly contemptible employment which ignorant man, either in his primitive condition, or since he became further advanced, has ever engaged in, and it is nothing but the most monstrous blasphemy for any theologian to thus endeavor to despoil eternal nature of her grandeur and glory, and set up some little, puny, feeble, fickle, fractious, changeable, passionate, angry God, to show her how to perform her constant work. It is a narrow and contemptible pitiful mind, that is not only unable, but is also unwilling, to grasp the great truth that nature was never invented, never devised, never formulated, never started, never brought into existence from nothing. Like time and space, which can only be compared to an eternal circle, it never began and never can end. Why cannot the theist, who so easily accords eternal existence to a deity which no mortal has ever seen, or ever will see, or even had any proofs for, generously yield to nature, of which there are millions of proof, the same eternal existence? Simply and only for the reason that such an admission must inevitably destroy the theology of every species of false religion, and consign the priests of all grades to that dense obscurity from which they should never have been permitted to emerge.

While it may be granted that nature is in a measure mysterious, it is no less a mystery to say the universe was made, for how about its

maker? Whence came he? If the universe must needs have a designer or creator, does not this designer and creator, possessing qualities superior to what he produced, also require a designer or creator? The great truth is, this imaginary creator is a monstrous creator of man, and is nothing but imaginary, and can never be made real.

The highest grade of Christian hypocrite is worse than any other, and no nation that adopts the Christian name is on that account alone any further advanced than the pagan nation, as all superiority claimed for their system by Christians is due to those in their midst who reject all religion, and rely on morality for a guide to conduct, and the reason for such a result is obvious; it is because the Christian, in order to be one, must renounce all use of his reasoning faculty, and receive without hesitation or examination the most preposterous and outrageous absurdities, which any or every unscrupulous impostor may introduce, advocate and enforce, and make an impossible hereafter his chief object of inquiry and solicitude, and neglect to cultivate the intellect in any other direction, and have consequently but one idea, and that the most worthless and foolish one he can have so that all progress has to be made by the enemies of all religions, who are hampered and opposed by these holy fanatics in any and every effort to assist the race to reach a higher grade of civilization. The twelve disciples, who simply formed a body guard to the leading impostor of that time, granting for the sake of argument that Jesus Christ did really live on earth, were never instructed beyond their already formed Jewish prejudices, and instructions relating to the keeping the ceremonial laws of Moses, under which they had all grown to manhood, and no impression was ever made during the three years they roamed about the country, only occasionally being present in the Jewish synagogue or place of worship when their leader was permitted to speak, and see him heal the sick, and perform what is termed miracles, and as nothing in the teachings of Christ was in conformity with the Jewish teaching, only an explanation in some unimportant respects different from that given by other rabbis, no organization was even suggested and no converts were made, for there is nothing different morally with the system then in use and ceremonially no change was even proposed; indeed, they all became so odious to the people that extermination was the only remedy by which the nest could be destroyed, and that extreme measure was decided upon, when toleration had only increased the evil, and in a bungling, ludicrous way, as given in the four gospels, was carried out, as those concerned in the plot expected, never supposing the dead could revive without external aid and continue the work in a more fierce and aggressive manner. That extreme humbug of humbugs and rascally imposition styled the



resurrection of the body, which is the main corner stone on which this whole edifice of fraud and deception rests, named by its authors the Christian church, is the most stupid of all the deceptions, in the sly way it was done, for, before Christ was ascertained by a spear thrust, to be really dead, there was a general resurrection of the dead in one cemetery near the spot where this crucifixion took place, on Calvary, when an earthquake had broken the rocks over the graves, thus releasing all the dead bodies, and they were sufficiently strong and active to walk back to their former homes and friends, presumably naked, as their clothing was all destroyed by decomposition, and were recognized by their former friends, and there this lie ends. Whether their souls ever came back, or whether they lived a long or short life after this, inspiration did not think proper to inform these holy writers, who wrote and invented this absurd story about two hundred years after it occurred. So, although the dead body of Christ was put into a vault cut out of the solid rock, and the small opening was securely closed by a stone so large that it could not be moved, without some strong mechanical device, such as a derrick, another earthquake had to be called upon to make a passage out of this vault possible, and an angel to sit on the stone, and so terrified the soldiers that were stationed there to see that no one stole this body, that they never dared to speak of the way the body was abstracted, for withholding which information they received a suitable bribe, and thus were prevented from exposing the diabolical fraud of Christ's resurrection to be discovered. The accounts of this transaction are so contradictory that nothing certain is known how this risen, crucified body was first discovered and identified, for the twelve were as much surprised, and as reluctant to admit that this stranger who walked and talked with them was actually their former chief, as were any others who casually met and conversed with this stranger, and they had by this time become scattered, and returned home to their families and friends, whom they had deserted for three years, and resumed their former occupations. Judas, the smartest of the lot, had committed suicide from remorse; the rest had all renounced their allegiance to this crucified impostor, and the whole scheme seemed in a fair way to collapse ignominiously; but when the resurrection was discovered by some obscure women, one at least of whom was of doubtful reputation, as she had parted with only seven of her devils, but had some left, who came to visit the grave, as an act of devotion to visit the tomb of a friend, they were informed by the angel who was sitting on the stone that the body of Christ was not within, but had revived and gone to Galilee, they spread this information among these absconding disciples, who placed enough reliance upon their statements to proceed there, to see for them-



selves whether the report by these women was true. The accounts of this event are so conflicting, that it seems a pity, for the sake of being able to get some information in some degree probable, that all but one of these accounts should be suppressed, instead of so clouding and obscuring the whole subject that no reliable information can be had, for there is no other source but this that even admits any of these stories to have any foundation in fact; but, however they disagree in other matter, they all agree that after various interviews which they describe, he sailed away into space, and was seen no more, as men do who go up in a balloon.

Let us now examine the biggest humbug of the whole, I mean the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which occupies a place in the church second to no other. It is made a saving ordinance in the Roman Catholic church, and is never celebrated only immediately after confession and absolution, and in extreme cases just previous to death, when a priest can be had to officiate. In the various subdivisions of the orthodox Christians, no oral confession at stated times is required, but an assent to the creeds of the sect the applicant proposes to join, after such creed is rehearsed in the hearing of the applicant. This whole ceremony is a pure invention, wholly unauthorized by any scripture, and wholly useless for any purpose, except to impress upon the spectators the false belief that Christ instituted this ceremony, to be a perpetual reminder of the great sacrifice Christ made, in submitting to all this ignominy and suffering, to make atonement for the sin of Adam, and provide a way by which those, who, by complying with certain prescribed terms, and becoming thereby qualified to observe this rite, which is falsely assumed to make its participants better prepared for the contest with evil, and place them in a better condition with reference to a home in heaven, in comparison with those who do not. There is not the slightest excuse for the institution of this foolish sacrament, from any authority to be found in the new testament, for all the authority there claimed to be, by its most zealous advocates, is the last supper or social meal, without any pretence that this last time the passover, which was an annual Jewish feast, and always celebrated by all good Jews, had any significance beyond the impression that he was about to be arrested, tried, convicted, and executed, before another return of this feast. This feast of the passover was instituted to commemorate the escape of the first born or oldest children of the Israelites, when the first born or oldest children of the Egyptians were to be slain by an angel in the night, and lest he might, through mistake, kill the wrong person, a large spot of blood on each side and over the top of the door was a mark or sign that Israelites lived here, and therefore he must pass along or over that house, without killing any

of its inmates. This night was ever after celebrated by all Jews as religiously and as truly as the Christians celebrate annually the birth of Christ, or Christmas, and the Jews still celebrate the passover, and will continue to do so as long as there is a Jew on earth, and Christ simply said to them they must or might, if they chose, wherever they were on the anniversary, eating the passover, remember him, their old leader and companion, and call to mind the words he then spoke to them as his last words, and therefore in some sense and in some degree they might seem to them solemn or sacred; but there was not the remotest idea ever entered the mind of Christ that any mortal, besides these who were present, need ever know that he told them that the piece of unleavened bread, which was like or identical with what we call crackers, was his body, for he knew, and they knew, and we know, it was not; and the wine he dealt out to them, we all know, as they all did, was not his blood; and what was the use of making such a senseless assertion, even after he had given thanks for these materials to enable them to eat this supper; and the owner of the room was better paid by these thanks than he expected to be when he furnished these thirteen the room and the provisions required for the supper. On this unproved and improbable story rests the whole of that stupendous fraud and deception called the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The sacrament of baptism rests on a still more flimsy and unsubstantial basis, a mere imitation; because Christ was baptized by John, therefore all must who profess belief in Christ, be baptized, including all infants whose parents, one or both, profess to be Christians. On the same principles, why not submit to crucifixion, because Christ was crucified as an example, as Christ himself never authorized either the sacrament of baptism or the Lord's supper, and it is nowhere any more than distantly alluded to in any of the epistles; they are simply only a late invention, and differently observed by the different sects, and it is reasonable to conclude they are of no use whatever, and ought to be abolished, for in the Roman Catholic church no bread is used, and the priest never eats the consecrated wafer and drinks all the wine, whereas in the celebration of the passover Christ himself neither ate nor drank any portion of what was provided, but gave the whole to the twelve, and refused to taste of either bread or wine.

Another wretched fraud that has lately been invented, and for which its advocates pretend to derive what little authority there is, in the first twenty-one verses of the gospel of John, the third chapter, is the doctrine of regeneration, or the new birth. The bold statement made in the third verse is in these words, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," or in other words, never can be admitted into heaven. That sweeping statement would deprive heaven, if any

such place was ever constructed or located, of all its inhabitants, for no mortal ever existed who did not die in the same moral condition that he inherited at his physical birth, and developed into at maturity, and this emotional excitement which is named new birth is only the result of an appeal to fear, so as to cause a temporary suspension of the exercise outwardly of some appetite or passion, causing an apparent change of conduct, when no inward change was experienced that was not before present, notwithstanding all the hypocritical profession of a few cranks, called ministers, who are too self righteous to wish the companionship of any but a select few, who, like themselves, have outwardly, from some selfish and mercenary reason, united together in some form of religious organization, whose chief benefit is to be realized in social and other intercourse with those persons who, like themselves, have subscribed to the same creed. Inasmuch as all sects of Christians acknowledge the necessity and importance of the new birth, as an antecedent to salvation, through the atonement for sin through the mediator Christ, it is necessary to define the term, and describe the manner by which this indispensable result is reached. The theory is as follows: The fall of the first parents of the race from a state of purity and innocence, which was foreseen, and which could not be prevented, introduced sin and misery into the world, which previous to that event, or fall, or disobedience, whatever you please to call it, had no existence. The disobedience of these first human beings so alienated the regard and benevolent intentions of the creator, that he pronounced a curse, not only upon the whole animate creation, but also upon the inanimate, or the earth and its products, and this curse, pronounced at the beginning of human history, has descended through all the subsequent generations, without any mitigation, till the advent of Christ, some four thousand years later, and was not removable or repealed till after his death and resurrection, and then the atonement was complete, and salvation or regeneration was possible to all those then and since living, that the individual who wished to avail himself of this mode of reconciliation, by complying to certain stated conditions, the promise was made that the future life was inevitably to be all that could be desired or imagined by such person, but no mitigation of the curse upon inanimate nature was either promised or ever will be realized. Every individual, according to this one-sided scheme, who lived before Christ died and rose again, for atonement was not completed till after the victim went back to his former position in heaven, as well as all those from whom the knowledge that any Christ has ever lived has been withheld, and those who reject or are indifferent to the terms of salvation, after being made acquainted with such terms, are consigned to eternal perdition or damnation, not only, but fearful



torment, as the scripture names it, when it makes Christ say to a set of his own nation: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers," or an extremely venomous reptile, "how can ye escape the damnation of hell." The preceding is a candid and fair statement of one side of this doctrine of the atonement, in as few words as the case will admit; much more of the details would only serve to obscure the subject. Now, the remedy proposed is the new birth, or regeneration, which is differently managed by different ecclesiastical divisions into which the church as a whole is divided. The birth of every child whose parents are Catholics secures regeneration in the following complicated way: Baptism by the priest, in as short a time after birth as circumstances will permit, secures to such child admission to the intermediate state, or purgatory, if death ends the life just begun, before confirmation is reached, which time is dependent on various conditions, but always before maturity is reached, when the eucharist or communion is celebrated for the first time, when regeneration is complete. No perceptible change of character is ever expected, or required, nothing but the ability to correctly answer certain prescribed questions, to which answers have been attached in the same book in which the questions are found, and all depend on memory, and nothing on the import of either questions or answers. This secures confirmation. After that oral confession, and absolution, or forgiveness, by a priest called a confessor, who has been confirmed or licensed by the bishop, who has been authorized to administer this license by the archbishop, who has been made such by a cardinal, who in turn was made cardinal by the pope, who was the successor of other popes, who was the successor of St. Peter, who was the vicar and successor of Christ, who was the second Adam, who was the son of God; and when forgiveness is reached through this round-about process it is genuine, and no other is, if the Catholic is to be the judge, being born of water at baptism and of the spirit at confirmation, the spirit being so diluted, by being transmitted through the various grades of holy men, that no benefit is ever perceived, and the recipient remains a mere man, just like his associates who never had this process. The Episcopal and Lutheran churches conduct the process of regeneration somewhat different, but no more consistent, but the intelligence of these two organizations is of a much higher grade, and so their life is in some degree more consistent with their profession. But all other orthodox churches deny the gradual manner of the new birth, as held by the foregoing, and insist that the change is instantaneous, as much so as to turn the body and walk in an opposite direction, so the whole mental organization is reversed; but this is the culmination of a previous earnest struggle of greater or less duration, and when this struggle has been begun, under



or by reason of the exciting influence of some skillful evangelist, who has become so very expert in imparting to a collection of stupid dunces, who have been prevailed upon to come within his magnetic influence, he is able to impart to them, and in consequence of which power or faculty he has become in so good demand that his services can only be secured at a price in proportionate ratio to the suckers he can rake in, and the money they can thereby secure, it usually terminates in causing the unconditional surrender of the victim to the outrageous imposition of the evangelist, and conclude to undertake the warfare of the Christian life, under the false impression that he has been regenerated, or born again, and therefore must be included, by the consecration of baptism, a worthy subject to receive the next imposition, the Lord's supper, when the whole rigmarole of regeneration is completed, and he then receives a full pass to heaven, and is ready to submit uncomplainingly to the process of severe and constant bleeding, to and beyond the full extent of his ability, to respond to the many urgent appeals for financial aid. This is orthodox regeneration.

One of the most powerful, if not absolutely the most powerful, accompaniment of the spurious form of religion under which we live, and which is called improperly Christianity, is the discovery and the application of the art of music, which, after many stages of development, has finally developed into an exact science, and in connection with another art, hymnology, has been in the past and now is one of the most essential aids of the priesthood, to propagate spurious and false doctrines, that has ever been invented. Some religious crank, falsely called a poet, is selected to arrange the various phases of doctrine which are held to be fundamental, or of first importance, by such sectarian leaders, and then invent metrical hymns, so as to make rhyme, of different measure, or as it is called, metre, and of sufficient variety to meet all emergencies, and that collection is revised and all objectionable matter is eliminated, and the book published and placed in the hands of those who are employed to sing the praises of God in the sanctuary, and in the pews or seats of the members. Another set of humbugs, falsely called musicians, are then required to produce metrical melodies and harmonies, which they extract from some previously invented musical composition, to endeavor to please God, and at the same time edify each other. This scheme is very cunningly devised, and reaches its ultimate requirement by exciting the emotional natures of some of the listeners, who imbibe along with the melodies the doctrines included in the words of the hymns, which are given out by the preacher, to as far as possible fortify and strengthen his weak arguments and entreaties. Chants, masses and anthems are also used by the Episcopal and Cath-

olics, who never use hymns, for regeneration is brought about in a more simple way, by merely baptizing the infant before sin, to remove the original inherited sin.

There still remains to consider the fictitious emotion called love, in connection with religious experience. The emotion of love, in the human animal is, when extended beyond paternal and filial love, a mere imaginary feeling, and when it reaches its strongest manifestation never goes beyond preference, and hate never goes beyond aversion, and there is no intensity in either, but merely indifference or choice; but these religious fanatics have incorporated love into their system, with the same intensity that all writers of fiction employ, when they go so far beyond reality that the experienced reader is disgusted with the excess, and this same overdrawn picture of the love of God is carried by the same vivid imagination to the same excess.

The summing up, therefore, of this whole matter, amounts to just this: When we hear of the various religious sects, through the hypocritical and fanatical leaders of such sects, boasting of their success in securing numbers to their particular organization, we must remember that such leaders can and do overstate their membership as to them seems expedient, and they cannot be detected in such fraud, for no outsider has any facility given him whereby to ascertain whether such numbers are correctly given, or are largely overdrawn, and when the temptation to overstate the aggregate is so strong, in order to encourage further efforts to keep these worthless organizations from sinking out of sight, the fair inference is that such overstatement is always made. The Roman and Greek Catholics include as Christians both Catholic parents and all children born of parents, whether both parents, or only one, and that one the mother, is Catholic, and no limit can be put on the number returned in any census, and the ambition of the Christian hypocrite to make it appear that his system is flourishing and prosperous beyond any of his rivals, makes it certain that the true number is never given, but largely overstated in every instance, and the like reasons operate on all the various sects, and there is not the slightest probability that the aggregate Christian population of the world is one-half as large as is given by their representations, for the Christian boast and confident prophecy has always been that the whole population of the world will eventually be Christians, so the inducement to overestimate their numbers, and underestimate that of the pagan world, so as to show a perceptible gain, is too strong to make it probable that any reliance can be put on it. Another baseless and false assumption is put forth by these self-righteous hypocrites, that were it not that Christ had lived and died on the cross, in precisely the way he did, none of the precepts that

are included in the most upright moral conduct, which is occasionally to be seen in some individuals who do not so much as profess to ever have even heard of any Christ, and have no sympathy with any form of religion, when the truth is that anyone who practices those moral precepts, that are, so to speak, innate or natural to all highly developed human beings, without reference to any form of religion, either Christian, Jewish, Mahometan, or pagan, or any other, is acting entirely independent of Christ, or any other impostor or reformer; and as many such can be found under one form of religion or civilization as another, and even infidels or skeptics are as highly endowed mentally and morally, and are able to show as many in proportion that are models of purity and virtue, sobriety and benevolence, as are any of the others, without having among their number any that are accused of the most scandalous and gross vices, that often are revealed to belong to some noted divine, like H. Ward Beecher and many others like him. In fact, the cloak of religion covers the most moral corruption and depravity of any cloak, and averts suspicion, and facilitates escape to the extent that nearly all the religious villains are able to escape detection and conviction, when escape from the jurisdiction is impossible. Very few that pretend to be Christians are such, except in name or by profession, and ought not to be included in the number included in the estimate as such. The Christian church organization, like every other, has to do its management on business principles, and when any considerable deficiency is caused in numbers by death or desertion, some means must be resorted to, in order to keep the number from diminishing not only, but the revenues must be increased, so as to prevent a collapse financially, and methods that formerly were found sufficient for this purpose, when, by getting revivals started and a high excitement of religious fervor among the older members this fervor in some cases would extend and by continuing the excitement a long time a few converts were secured but this process has had its day and has been abandoned. After that came the evangelist movement which was for a time used for all it was worth but it was found too costly for these holy experts were so few and the demand for their services was so great that they like all other specialists must have large fees and the risk of success had to be taken by those who employed them and this experiment was too costly and is now abandoned and a new device or invention has come to the front and is managed without cost and in the ten years' experiment it has spread so as to encourage its founders to extend it as an auxiliary or supplement to the Sunday-school which is primary or the beginning of the process of regeneration. This device is named the Christian Endeavor Society and was first invented at Portland, Maine, by an obscure minister by the

name of Frances E. Clark, D. D., which some one who was at a loss to know what D. D. meant called it double devil, and like all other new inventions has been improved upon and enlarged and brought its inventor into conspicuous notice from obscurity and he has become the President of a national society which sent 15,000 delegates from 16,000 societies to attend the tenth annual convention at Minneapolis in July, 1891. The history of this movement has revealed so much encouraging progress towards strengthening and continuing a hopeless and sinking cause that its promoters and beneficiaries the priests who hope thereby to increase the nearly dried up source from whence they derive their chief revenue are now very enthusiastic and energetic in encouraging this last movement which if it like all the rest fails their last hope is gone also. This invention is very simple and yet in its details quite complicated beginning with little children and including all up to adult age in membership, who are all obliged to sign and keep this pledge: "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise him to do whatever he would like to have me do. That I will make it the rule of life to pray and to read the Bible every day. That I will support my own church in every way, especially by attending all her Sunday and mid-week services, unless prevented by some reason which I dare give to my Saviour, and that just so far as I know how throughout my whole life I will endeavor to lead a Christian life." Anybody who subscribes to this pledge, and in addition agrees to take some part other than singing becomes a member whether man, woman or child, and there is much more detail pertaining which secure a renewal of the pledges and prevent those who are inclined to lapse from doing so. This will be tried awhile like any other new movement and like the rest prove worthless, but while it lasts will attract the young and perpetuate awhile longer the rule of superstition and deception and may be secure a few paying members, but the great majority in numbers will lapse when they grow older.

As a closing theme to this volume I wish to say something about the "Eastern Question." I suppose very few of my readers have any but an extremely faint perception concerning that very important and far-reaching question. While it is true that much has been said in periodicals and papers about it, more especially in late years, it has not been definite and consecutive enough for the general or casual reader to gather much concerning it, to impress him of its supreme importance, but at the present time, the closing months of 1895, a revival of this question, in the slaughter by the Turks of the Armenians, has caused the thinking portion, at least, of the world to give earnest attention and forcible expression, through the papers and periodicals, to radical views concerning the duty of the Christian nations to interfere, and by force,



if required, cause the Turks to not only cease from slaughtering their Christian subjects, but also to protect them from infuriated mobs of Mahometans.

In past times, as remote as long previous to the crusades of the Christians of Europe, who, in seven different extensive expeditions, to recover from the Turks the sacred places in Palestine, which were unsuccessful after a prodigious cost of both treasure and blood, this question had its origin, and the intense animosity roused into activity at that time has never ceased to operate, but has been many times revived and intensified, till it has become so desperate that some final solution of it is expected to be now, as it has been many times before, near at hand. The magnitude of the question is such as to appall the most eminent and experienced statesmen of every country in Europe, while this country is not much interested, except in the way it is settled, or, in other words, is not a direct party to interfere, only as far as influence goes.

The Christians in the Turkish Empire are not the variety included in any in this land. The Armenians are a branch by themselves of mere nominal Christians, like the Nestorians and some others who have come under the Turkish yoke by conquest, and hence expect extreme rigor in return for the escape from extermination, which is the usual fate of all Turkish subjects who refuse to embrace Islamism. This alternative was adopted by the Turks immediately after the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, at the behest of the inquisition, and if any modification of this practice is had, it is in return for some corresponding concession by those who are spared from extermination. A more extensive acquaintance of all the circumstances is required before any judgment of value is possible, but the general fact that no two rival religions, each desiring supremacy, and each claiming superiority, can exist in contact with each other, is as old as history, and another fact that the strongest has both the right and ability to rule their own subjects in their own way, has always been admitted, and always must be, as long as the minority remain subjected; and the further fact that rebellion must be overcome by force in the most stern and vigorous way, as well as the most speedy, has been the experience of all humanity in all time, and will continue to be, for on that depends the existence of every nation. This Eastern question is all a religious question as a basis, but incidental to that some others may be involved, hence a religious war is the most violent and sanguinary of all wars, for fanaticism, stirred into activity by bigotry, is incapable of reason or restraint, and when ignorance is added to power, only absolute victory can end conflict; hence the statesmen who have on their hands this delicate but important question are, and ought to be, cautious and conciliating, for a religious war, once begun, can and very

likely will spread beyond the ability of any or perhaps every nation to control. Such is the influence of the priest of all religions over the ignorant masses that it is they who must be obeyed instead of the sovereign, and this is the principal danger to be encountered, for there is not now, and there never has been, any sovereign in Europe who has not been inferior to the priest in ability to control the passions of the masses of the people; for the king only controls the body, while the priest controls the mind that animates the body, causing it to act as he dictates. This is the power this writer is seeking to undermine and eventually to destroy, and abolish forever every form of religion, and thus secure harmony, and remove from mankind every ambition except to excel in every branch of knowledge, as it is disclosed in all the departments of science, and cause the streams of revenue that have in all time flowed into the capacious pockets of the priests of all grades to be diverted into a more useful receptacle, the spread of intelligence, and create the ambition to become famous for learning and usefulness to a universal humanity. I have fully realized what an odium would attach to any name who dare to write as I have done, but I have reflected that although I may be snubbed by this generation, perhaps I would be applauded by the next, and although that would be no comfort to a dead man, it might be to some of his posterity.

In the course of my writings I have said something about the missionary enterprise, as conducted by Christian people, but I want to put on record a few more thoughts before I close; I suppose the Chinese nation were more advanced in civilization, long before the period given in the Bible as the date of the origin of all created things, than any nation on earth now is, in some directions, and especially in their conception of the best moral and political systems to promote happiness and prosperity among men. A familiarity with Chinese history reveals the origin of moral codes that were in full vigor a thousand years before Egypt emerged from the savage state, or before the date of Noah's flood, and have never ceased to cultivate and practice, in their own country, such precepts as were found by experience best adapted to secure the present welfare of their people, and have never in all their history anticipated any future life, therefore they needed no religion that required a priesthood to instruct and distract the people about any God or devil, but that rascally system that originated in India and was called Brahmanism anciently, but is now known as Theosophy, could not be content without doing an outrage by sending their priests into China, to proselyte and disturb the quiet contentment of that people, unasked and undesired, but they never had but poor success, and their influence had entirely disappeared long before this, called the Christian era, begun; but 700 years

previous they had left among the Chinese what the Christians have always claimed as the great discovery of their Christ, or the concentrated essence of their system, that God ultimately rewards the good and punishes the wicked, the one without love and the other without hate, and that however wicked a man might be, if he only repent, he may be forgiven. This is a discovery of Brahma, and in Christianity is only copied, not original.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Jesuits sent three missionaries, who landed at Macao. One of these had medical skill, one was an artist, one a civil engineer; none of these pretended to aspire to teach religion at first, but only to become celebrated in another calling, and gradually become familiar with the language and customs of the Chinese, when it might and did become possible to begin to exercise the calling for which their superiors sent them out and their success in securing the favor of the then ruler of China, "Kanghi," one of the most enlightened and virtuous rulers China ever had, was such that many more Jesuits were admitted and begun their crusade in so mild and innocent a way that their ultimate designs were not for some time suspected, and they were practically unopposed for many years, but the continued reinforcements of priests, mainly from France, and the want of caution of these new fanatics, so alarmed the rulers that their destruction was decreed, and they were banished beyond the frontiers in the reign of "Yung Ching," who dismissed them with a lecture in which he clearly described to them his opinions in reference to the real object they and those who were behind them had, which was no less than "a wish to destroy our laws, distract our people, and create a rebellion that will give those behind you an excuse to invade and destroy our national existence. This is already manifest in the province of Tuhkien, where your operations have been allowed. The high officials have already told me this, therefore, it is my duty to provide a remedy for the disorder. You tell me your law is not a false one. I don't know if it is or not; when I find it is, I will destroy your churches and drive you all out of my country. If I should send a troop of Bonzes into your country, in order to preach their doctrines, how would you receive them? When I was a prince, without authority, I clearly saw that my father was being deceived by your cunning duplicity, but I dared say nothing, but you are not able to deceive me any more or my people; you wish us all to become Christians, so we then would be subjects of your kings. The converts you have made already recognize nobody but you, and in time of trouble they would only listen to you. My sole care is to protect my people from intermeddlers from outside, so you are all expelled beyond my frontiers." This edict abolished all the missionary success till the



beginning of this century, when the same scheme as failed in the last century has been revived, and the same result, the slaughter and expulsion of the missionaries is now in progress, for that people are determined at whatever cost to be rid of the vileness of priests, who are only a vile nest of disturbers of the peace, but there is a prospect that military force will be used, to make good the saying of "one who came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword," meaning by that word force of whatever kind, and this is the ulterior intention of all interference of all missionaries, to finally overcome and absorb the whole earth, till a universal religious despotism of Christianity in some of its forms is realized, and this open field furnishes an outlet where the incompetents, who have failed to reach the capacity to instruct civilized men, can still operate among the savages, if they are willing to risk their lives, and they are fanatical enough for that in most cases. A fanatic or enthusiast is content to hear one side of an argument, and from that to theorize and develop a system. Now it is certain the human race, or that portion of it included as any variety of Christians, have never been made acquainted with the original skeptics, who were arrayed against Christianity in the formative period of its career, and so the one side, decreed by the majority of a corrupt council, has been all that was permitted to be disclosed, for the priests have always destroyed all conflicting arguments by a process much more practicable than by counter arguments. Who has ever seen the arguments that Celsus employed in opposition to the chief foundation of the imposition, as it had developed in the second century? Origen's defence is extant, but Celsus's attack has been squelched, and mankind have never been permitted to know anything of the history of this imposition but such as the new testament teaches, but that Celsus, and presumably many others like him, were distinctly hostile to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is well known, and in its philosophical views he was a believer, and it is also known Celsus wrote at least two books against the Christians, but they have never seen the light, and, as the art of printing was not then known, manuscripts were never multiplied, and destruction was easy, but so was preservation when the majority so decreed; hence we have only one side of the controversy, and that the affirmative. Why was it necessary for Origen to reply to Celsus at such great length? It was because he was a cultivated and a formidable man, acquainted with the doctrines of the Assvrians, the Jews, the Persians, and others which existed before and at the time when the new religion was just in embryo, and was welcomed then, as it always since has been, by only the lower classes of such as arrived at adult age, and were only full grown children in their ability to comprehend theological twaddle. All heathen philosophers then, as



now, regard the apostolic teachings dangerous, and destructive of the very existence of civilized society, and it is only because the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, so called, are entirely disregarded, as well as the teachings of the apostles, who clamored for having all things common, that any civilization is possible. The Christ of the gospels and the apostles gathered around them such as they themselves were, the poor sinners, the most despised members of human society, and offered them pardon, love and sympathy, if they only repent and sin no more. What else do Christian priests do now? If they ever secure one who has been uninstructed in his early years, they listen to the priest for other motives than to be saved from future damnation, and are hypocrites who dare not disclose their real skepticism for prudent reasons. He who reads these sentences, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and "In the beginning was the Word," is compelled to admit that thought is required instead of faith, and theology has so far struggled in vain to comprehend one or the other, and always will, but science will at some time reach a definite, true solution of the second sentence, as it has already of the first. The apologetics of primitive Christianity was only a bridge to connect Greek philosophy with religion, and its twin theology is only a weapon to defend it, but it must also answer philosophy as well as defend religion. Can it do this? We shall see.

I have sometimes felt while tracing the lines which this volume contains, an apprehension lest in the absorbing interest required to construct them so as to demonstrate the superiority of science over religion, I may have blunted some people's moral perceptions when man is elevated above matter. Much as I have coveted and still do covet that fame which makes the fame of one man, and that man, myself, the common inheritance of all men, still I would infinitely prefer that my name should pass away with my breath, than that I should transmit to posterity any portion of that knowledge that the good might neglect to exercise and the bad might unscrupulously pervert.

Human society, in this period of the world's history, is confronted by Christianity, such as it is, and it is the implacable foe of society, in fact its open enemy, which it must crush, or itself will be crushed, and in this case all discussion is reduced to a struggle, and all reasoning to a weapon. What must be done in the presence of an irreconcilable enemy? Must we enter into controversy with him? No! we must go to war with him. Therefore society must defend itself against Christianity, not by reasoning with it, but by force. It must not try to refute its doctrines and symbols, but repress them. Such a devilish institution as the inquisition, or, as these holy rascals mildly called it, the "Holy office," in the close of the fifteenth century, is the logical consequence of not only the

Roman Catholic, but also of the whole orthodox system, for the church as a whole is bound when she has the chance, which she is persistently striving for, to bring into operation the inquisition, and the only reason now why she does not is because she cannot: for why is this kind of repression less necessary now than it was in former times? Is the opposition of skeptics or infidels less dangerous? Assuredly not. The reason must therefore be that the church is weaker. We are tolerated because we cannot now be strangled, for power has always been the measure of the toleration of that infernal tyrant, the Christian church, in all its past history. I ask any reader of this book to excuse a few views of the author which he has encountered, and expect he will judge it not by some isolated passages, but by its general spirit or intention. Any author can only give expression to his thoughts, each of which is only true when taken as a whole or with others. A single statement perhaps is false, for it expresses only one side, and truth is made up sometimes of many untruths. What I have chiefly sought to inculcate is extreme hatred to not only the priest, but his systems, for its main object is to guide back into the right road some who know not which way to go, and who are searching everywhere in vain for an object of worship and devotion.

The want of uniformity in the physical and mental qualities pertaining to the different individuals that together compose the human family or race, as well as the different national characteristics, also the environments and the motives to conduct, that are required to make up the wonderful variety or capacity, needs, desires and aspirations, ambitions and attainments, makes it impossible to invent any system that will be adapted in the long run to meet this widely differing demand. The Christian impostors, at the outset of their career as reformers, real or pretended, were positive that their particular form of doctrine or belief would, without doubt, so impress every adherent of all the different forms of idolatry or paganism with which the nations outside of Judaism, as well as Judaism itself, were supplied, and to which they were more or less strongly attached, that these, to the Christian, false systems, would voluntarily, upon the presentation and offer to them of this new system, accept and adopt it, and renounce the old one. The disappointment of this over sanguine expectation would have discouraged any prudent and reasonable reformer from pursuing his fanatical and unsuccessful crusade, which has been in progress for near two thousand years, and which, considering the increase in the aggregate population of the world at the beginning of the Christian era and the present time, actually has materially diminished in numbers and influence, and has long since reached its highest point of success, and will soon disappear,

for it is founded on nothing better than mythology, fraud, humbug, and the grossest deception, and has already long outlived its deserts, and when it is abolished the masses of the people will be able to throw off the miserable nightmare of fear, as well as the unfounded satisfaction of hope, that has so long on the one hand cursed them, and on the other deceived them. There ought to be some method devised to severely punish those who deliberately and willfully impose so enormously wicked and costly deception as any form of religion manifestly is, and if there was any real hell more dreadful in its torture than the imaginary one the Christian has invented, for all who either neglect or refuse to adopt their methods, such a place would be far too good to receive these impious rascals who invented and have continued this deception, for no other purpose than the unholy one of avarice, or a means by which to procure a good fat living, without rendering any equivalent, which to any right mind is no better than stealing. This may and most likely will sound harsh to both the priests and their ignorant dupes, or those who are victims of their criminal deception, but another class of independent and unbiased thinkers will welcome and approve any language that promises to weaken the grip with which the priesthood hold their victims in subjection.

Every form of religious belief with which the world has been cursed had a beginning in the remote past, more or less remote from this age of light and knowledge. Many forms are recorded in the histories that are accessible to those whose taste and wish for that information incline them to investigate the origin and development of these several forms, and many others are known to exist, of whose peculiar tenets only the mere outline can be known, and that is very imperfect and obscure, and although the vast majority of the human race which inhabit the regions that are inaccessible to the nations who have the Christian form, adhere to these, to us, unexplained and incomprehensible instructions, we Christians simply call them heathen barbarians, pity their ignorant and abject moral condition, and congratulate ourselves that we are so highly favored as to have a revelation directly from the God of all the universe, embodying all that is of any value and making the false boast that all that is not found in the Christian system is, and must necessarily be, spurious and false, consequently of no importance, and therefore these heathen and their religions are held in utter loathing and contempt by those who were told by the founder of the Christian system that they alone were the salt of the earth and the light of the world, generating in these self-righteous Christians a superiority, when the reverse is the proper designation, for they are morally inferior to any known form of religion, as a class or organization,



Let us examine this claim that the Christian makes, in favor of the system to which he adheres, and see on what it is founded, and whether it in reality has any foundation better than assumption, and in order to do this we have to go back to a period long before the pretended advent of Jesus Christ, the alleged founder of the system, who, according to the theory adopted by the instigators or inventors of this system of humbug and deception, appeared about nineteen hundred years ago. The necessity for the advent or appearance of a saviour at all was caused more than four thousand years previous to the actual appearance of the redeemer promised; such promise is alleged by these holy impostors to have been made as soon as the fall of Adam into sin, a few days after he had been transformed out of a lump of mud into a fully developed specimen, morally and physically, of the highest type of humanity that has ever existed, made such redemption necessary, and is in these words: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That is a very vague and indefinite promise, but under the circumstances was regarded as better than none at all, and, as no time was set for the head to be smashed by the seed of the woman, no hardship can be urged that four thousand years was allowed the serpent to have his head left whole. The failure of this seed to put in its appearance has made the work of smashing the head so difficult, that there is great doubt about its ever being done, but the smashers are so persistent and confident of success ultimately, that if the necessary money is forthcoming, and the effort is persisted in long enough, they agree on their part to see it done, notwithstanding no progress can be shown to make it even probable that any serious injury will ever be done to the head, or even the tail of the allegorical serpent, who caused sin to sprout, grow mature, and bear fruit at the beginning of human history. The woman in this foolish story did all the damage, therefore the impostors who started this new religion had to contrive to make some other woman repair the damage, for it must be the seed of the woman only, not of man and woman, as is necessary in all other cases to produce any result. So the lying and impossible, absurd and weak story, recorded in the first chapter of the gospel according to Matthew, beginning at the eighteenth verse, and also in the first chapter of Luke at the twenty-sixth verse. These two statements are somewhat conflicting, but they are both so manifestly untrue and contrary to reason and common sense, not to say absolutely impossible, that the author of this mess of vile trash, whoever he was, must have been surprised and amazed to find any one stupid and ignorant enough not to reject it, as an insult to the intelligence of the most degraded of the offscouring of the Jewish people, to whom this story was first told. But such as it is, it has found hundreds of thousands of



professed believers in the past, and will continue to find thousands more, for as long as a hungry set of lazy scoundrels, called priests, of all grades, are allowed to prey upon any community, and palm themselves off as divinely ordained to teach that this holy book, which is mainly made up of such impossible and absurd stories, called miracles to make them appear true, is the undisputed, divinely revealed word of God, just so long there will be found fools enough to be not only willing but eager to receive such teaching, for a full grown child is as much a fool when he submits his reason to a designing priest, as one in whom the faculty of reason is just beginning to develop. All that portion of the people, called Christians, who belong to the Roman Catholic church, teach their dupes through the priests of various grades that the mother of Christ, who they name the Virgin Mary, conceived a son by force of her imagination acting on the generative organs, which they call being full of the holy ghost, and that this son was brought into the world in the usual way, and after all this had occurred she was still a virgin, and so had continued to be, and is at present, a fit object of worship and adoration, notwithstanding she had three other sons and two daughters, unless Mark and Luke misrepresent. The Greek Catholics reject the idea that the Virgin Mary remained a virgin after giving birth to a child, and admit that she afterwards became a wife and mother of other children. All other sects of Christians deny that she was in any sense a virgin after her espoused husband discovered her supposed criminal situation, but admit that the holy ghost was father to the unborn infant. The Jews, who are manifestly in the possession of the best sources of information of any of the former, deny the whole story, and boldly assert that the whole story told by the evangelists is a downright lie, and are able to so prove it to be, having in their possession authentic histories of the whole affairs of their nation, and no such mention can be found in their histories; but there must be noted one exception. There is in Josephus's history, in such copies only as are prepared for sale to circulate among Christians, a short reference to a person in Judea, of the name of Christ, who was alleged by the Christians to be their foundation, but no allusion whatever to this Christ is in the original work written in Hebrew and translated into Greek, by Josephus, and all intelligent Jews of any age have never, either through their prophets or in any other way, had any promise, or expectation, or need of any Messiah, and that none of their sacrifices ever had any other significance than ceremonial observance, to comply with established usage, and there was never expressed a necessity, a wish or an expectation of any supernatural aid, in any way, considering themselves fully competent to care for themselves during this life, and have no wish or expectation of a future life.

The above digression from the subject under consideration seemed proper to be made, to understand more fully what is to follow. The monstrously absurd and wicked invention of the dogma on which the whole of the imposition named Christianity, is founded, which is, that in consequence of the disobedience of the mythical first parents of the race, the whole race inherited a sinful and corrupt nature, which was transmitted to every individual of all generations, making it necessary for a redeemer to pay the debt, so as to liberate the real debtor from the penalty; and this was why the system upon which the Jewish system was made to depend, upon offering sacrifices to typify an atoning sacrifice, to appease an offended creator, who was supposed to be so accommodating in his disposition, and so self-denying in his generosity, as to accept the proposition of his only son to take a journey down to earth, to be born of a woman, to live a life of poverty for thirty years, more or less, to suffer the torture of crucifixion, to rise from the grave and come back to his former home, and all this and much more was indispensable, so that one poor, unfortunate sinner, who sinned only for the reason that it was not possible to avoid it, might be saved; for just as much humiliation and suffering was indispensable, so that one poor lost sinner might be saved, for just as much was required by this scheme to save one as to save every individual that has ever or that will ever live, and after all this preparation had been made, and the plan had been so far completed as to admit of being tested, it was discovered that vast multitudes of human beings had lived and died for many thousand ages before the date assigned by these holy impostors for the transactions they record as being the first commencement of time.

The latest discovery of science makes it necessary to abandon the false assumption made in scripture as to the way the creation originated, and especially the manner by which the first pair of human animals derived their existence, and it has been so far progressed that all the progressive theologians are now striving to find a way to harmonize the conflicting and directly contradictory statements of revelation, so called, and science, for science is not science without it is capable of proof, and revelation is all the more to be called revelation when it is entirely destitute of proof, not only, but so impossible as not to be capable of belief, mere guess work, hence all this scheme of salvation, so elaborately invented, is wholly unnecessary and futile, and all the efforts put forth to redeem what was never forfeited, and to save what was never lost, have been so much idle and useless labor and expense. But inasmuch as there yet remains among all the orthodox sects of Christians a numerous and strong body of thinkers, whose pecuniary interest, to say nothing of any higher motive, make it necessary to uphold and defend

what has been received and believed in the past to the extent that they refuse to examine any and every proposition that in their judgment would have a tendency to in any degree weaken and unsettle their convictions, it seems proper to endeavor to show the imposition up in its true light, and if possible to bring the system of fraud and deception into contempt and ridicule, for there is no need to have any respect or any feeling of sanctity or reverence by which this subject has always been surrounded. While it is freely admitted that the organizations called churches have some use, and some claim to respectful treatment at the hands of those that wish to see them abolished, on account of furnishing a medium for social intercourse, and an opportunity for the display of personal adornments, and a desire of those of moderate ability to become conspicuous, on account of an excess of zeal to promote and support the various charitable enterprises for the temporal benefit of the poor and unfortunate among their fellow mortals, it still remains an undecided question whether, on the whole, the damage done in the dissemination of false instruction, causing a stagnation of all investigation, requiring an unquestioned assent to what those who for the time have authority over the source of knowledge, regarding a future state, and an enormous outlay of money that otherwise would be useful to diminish want and misery, does not more than offset all the benefits supposed to be received. The inventors of the fictitious narrative of the events that are recorded in the four gospels are unknown, as the utmost research and investigation of all the commentators that have ever written on this subject cannot give any better solution of this question than probability, and the time when these impostors wrote is still more obscure, but no one of them all claims that any one attempted any description of the manner of the introduction of this spurious system, without placing the date from one hundred to two hundred years previous to the life time of the writer, and he writes of these events as though he was personally present, and ascertained by actual observation and investigation that all these scenes and events occurred precisely as the narrative relates, and this ability to so write of events long past, by mere invention and imposition, is what these impostors called inspiration. A far more reasonable way to account for the advent of the son of God on a mission of love, redemption and salvation, to a condemned and lost race of mortals, would have been to have had him arrive on earth in a fully matured physical body and mature intellectual development, in full view of all living humanity, and announce in a language all could understand, with a voice that could be distinctly heard by every inhabitant of earth, his purpose, state his terms, and appoint suitable agents to transact such important business, and then



ascend to his heavenly abode, as he finally did, if the obscure and unknown individual who wrote his biography is to be believed, and thus have avoided all this humiliation, degradation and suffering. The founders of all kinds of spurious religion have begun their career in poverty and obscurity, for no other would ever desire any religion at all, hence all the fictitious and prominent characters included in this narrative are of this description. The parents of this wonderful being had to perform a long journey on foot, for the want of the means to procure comfortable transportation, which was necessary for a woman who was soon to become a mother, to the national city or capital of the country, for the purpose of being taxed, when they had no property subject to a tax; both husband and wife must go, when the husband alone was competent to do all business required to be done, especially as the condition of the wife was such that both decency and prudence required her to remain at home, and on arriving at an obscure suburb of Jerusalem, having no means to procure suitable accommodations, and no friends upon which they could call for assistance, this child, of which the holy ghost was the father, was deposited in a manger, or feed trough, of a stable, where he was visited by a delegation of wise men, with valuable presents, from a distant country, who had found this obscure stable in an obscure village by the guide of a star, as they asserted, and were ready and anxious to worship this miniature God. Matthew records that in order to escape the decree of Herod, the order was given to cause every male child under two years of age to be put to death, in order that this obscure infant might be included in such destruction, for fear he might in time develop into a troublesome rival, to dispute the authority of the Roman government, and that in order to escape destruction his parents fled with him by night into a country called Egypt, over which the Roman government had not yet obtained control; but Luke says they went back to their home in Nazareth, so there is a disagreement in inspired record. The commentators excuse these variations, which are many in these accounts, by saying that it merely proves that these men wrote, each being ignorant that the other had written, and so there was a necessity for a variation, for fear that if they wrote alike there would be suspicion of collusion; however, we now lose sight of the whole family for twelve years, when they turn up again, on a return journey from Jerusalem, again on foot, on account of poverty, and the boy Christ being not to be found among the company when three days' journey had been made, a return journey had to be made to recover the lost child, who was finally found in the temple disputing with the physicians, or doctors, as they are called, and asking foolish questions, as boys of that age are too apt to do. This is all we hear till the boy is



a mature man, as a Jew is required to be thirty years old before he is allowed to teach the people. How strange it seems that such a brief outline should be all that inspiration could afford to reveal of so wonderful and important a being. There is, however, in use among Catholics, an apocraphal new testament, which has miraculous incidents in the life of this phenomenal prodigy, which, however, the Protestants reject as not inspired, the same as they do the old testament apocraphy, but the lack of inspired information concerning the manner this wonderful being developed in his progress toward maturity has been in part supplied by numerous modern writers, in inventing plausible fictitious theories, based on nothing, to give the missing information, and at the same time to fill their own pockets with the proceeds of the sale, to a lot of silly dupes, of this spurious stuff. The inspired record makes it appear indispensable for him, Christ, to make a long journey, to find another holy impostor by the name of John, who is called the Baptist. This impostor invented the rite of baptism, and put it in operation, and although he never professed, or any one for him, to be more than a mere man, the son of God considered it to be necessary, in order that he might be prepared to resist his satanic majesty, the devil, who he was about to encounter in a fierce contest for the next forty days, to be emblematically purified, and to have his father, the holy ghost, who had left him to care for himself for the last thirty years, again come down in the form of a dove, and have his other father, who had been so self-denying as to dispense with his companionship all these thirty years, endorse him in a short speech, as follows: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Now for the encounter with the devil, for whom he had to wait, without food or shelter, forty days and nights, and how much longer we are not told, but we are told that afterward he was hungry, but not being able to eat stones, he must wait till some angels, who are always to be expected along when there is an emergency, arrive; in the meantime he and the devil climb up on the pinnacle, or steeple having a sharp point, of the temple. The account omits to state whether the temple was transported fifty miles to this wilderness, or whether the wilderness was moved to Jerusalem, but that is immaterial; at all events, he refused to jump off, to see whether gravity would bring him down, or whether, like chaff, he would float in the air, so that test failed by his refusal to jump. We are not informed how he got down, but we next discover him on the top of an exceeding high mountain. and as there is no high mountains within a thousand miles, we must conclude that a journey was made, or the mountain was moved to him, and on his refusing the generous offer of all the kingdoms of the world, for the trifling sum of just falling down and worshipping him,

he declined this splendid offer for the reason that there was no authority for any one to receive worship but the Lord God, and, instead of reminding the devil he could not give away that which was not his, allowed him to depart for a season, as Luke has it in his account, after he had ended all his temptation, but says nothing about any angels coming to minister or supply his wants, as Matthew has it; and as his life and doings are recorded in the first of the four gospels, it is entitled to the preference, where there is a variation of statement of the same transaction, as many such are found, and as the name of Matthew is entitled to greater respect, because he was one of the twelve apostles, which the other three are not, the other's record of what he had put on record must have sufficient variation to avoid suspicion of being mere copyists, and also they must needs invent stories of their own. The first instruction, or discourse, which is said to have been the words of John the Baptist, but as that is the foundation of all orthodox Christianity, it must have been endorsed by him, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What is it to repent? The theological definition is, "to regret, to be sorry." Why? Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That is a smart sermon for a beginner, conveying a meaning exactly the opposite of what was intended, and that is just what the next sermon by this preacher, recorded in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew, does, in nearly every other proposition there put forth, which will be reviewed in a separate article. The next act in this strange drama is the commanding of four men, who he found by the side of a small lake, fishing, to follow him, without giving any reason or promising any wages, but they were to fish for men instead of fish, a very unpromising and unprofitable occupation, as it turned out to be, for they were scarcely intelligent enough to catch any fish, and they failed entirely to catch any men, for they never did anything but wander around the country like so many tramps, a burden and terror to the whole community, and they finally became so intolerably odious that they had to be exterminated by violence, within about three years, and when we read the accounts of the outrages they committed, the wonder is that there was enough patience to endure the obnoxious presence of thirteen unproductive paupers, who most of them had left families to be provided for, when they were also receiving gratis a good living. It never has occurred to any expositor to attempt to explain why Christ had any use for twelve recruits, to do nothing. If he had worked at his trade of carpenter, there would have been a use for more or less help, but what earthly use there could have been for a company of twelve useless, idle loafers, tramping around that desolate, god forsaken country, as a sort of body guard to this impostor, can never be

explained. Somebody had to feed, clothe and shelter them, and expect no compensation, and a lower and more degraded set of men, according as they are described and the calling they had before followed, would have been impossible to have selected, and no other class would ever pay any attention to Christ during his whole life, and they are a fair sample of what has since joined that fanatical, corrupt and wicked body, the Christian church. How this impostor came to practice the art of healing all manner of disease, and where he obtained the money to pay for his education in medical science, has not been revealed. It may be assumed with as much propriety as other things connected with this subject are assumed, that he was studying medicine during the years of seclusion, between twelve, where we seen him asking questions of the doctors in the temple, when he deserted his parents, and the age of thirty, when we next see him. There never has been any pretence that at the beginning of his career he had any miraculous gift, or ever received or required any pay, but it is far more reasonable that all these pretended miraculous cures and all these parables were the pure inventions of a set of mongrel Jews, that conspired together to begin a new kind of religion after the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the remnant of the nation among other nations, making it impossible to continue the pure Jewish worship, and then accordingly chose this mode and brought forward this fictitious hero, Christ Jesus, who they attempted to prove was, on the side of both father and mother a pure Jew, and made him both a second Adam to redeem what was lost by the first, and a second Moses to give a new code of laws, never assuming or even admitting that he was more than human, leaving successive impostors the task of inventing his divine origin, and the introduction of all this spurious nonsense recorded in the four gospels and all other writings, such as Acts, Epistles, Revelations, attributed by the majority vote of some later council of later impostors to the authors whose name they bear, and are placed before them, and it is of no consequence who they were, for whoever they were they are of no consequence, for the whole system is fraud and humbug, and at the close of the life of the hero of this monstrous imposition, no progress had been made, and no church organization was formed for more than three hundred years, and up to the present time nothing but the name distinguishes those who call themselves Christians from those who do not.

It must be a humiliating fact, and no doubt is, for the Christian world to see, as they do see, the portions of this earth which in all the wonderful events of which any record is found only in his sacred books, of both the Jew and the Christian, first the origin of man, next the origin of the chosen people of God, and over which they long tyrannized, and



still later the birth place of Christianity, and where it flourished for a brief time, and became so insolent, bold and defiant, the region traversed by the apostles, and afterward becoming a tyrannical persecuting power, boastful and intolerant to those who refused or neglected to adopt its absurd tenets, now and for a long past time in possession of its most determined rivals and bitterest enemies, the Mahometans, to the extent that it amounts to a perpetual banishment from those shrines considered by the whole Christian world as the most sacred spot on the whole earth, and to secure the possession of which they have in vain poured out vast treasures of money and vast sacrifice of human life, in seven unsuccessful crusades, to recover possession of what superior force had deprived them and forced them to abandon, and now merely concede them the privilege to temporarily visit, in return for some like privilege they get for that privilege, and this whole region again return to its primitive condition of semi-barbarism, from which the Christian fondly imagined he had rescued it; such a result ought to teach, and would teach any but the most fanatical and bigoted set that ever lived, the Christian, that their God neither needed or cared for their regard, and one would naturally suppose that such want of protective care as this God they so faithfully serve and adore, would cause those so situated to withdraw their confidence, and refuse to worship such an impartial God, but the reverse effect seems to operate in this case, for the Christian nations hope to one day be strong enough and sagacious enough to recover from the Turks that country, of which they consider the present occupants unworthy, and from which they are now banished practically, and to which they claim a superior title.

The truth is, and may as well be stated, and eventually will be admitted, that all forms and kinds of religion are spurious, and consequently a positive damage, viewed from any standpoint that it is possible to imagine, and until they are all abolished by the gradual spread and adoption of the principles which are involved in the term free thought, causing an intelligent and patient investigation of the origin of these false systems, and the causes why they have been perpetuated, and the total lack of any utility or benefit to be derived from any further toleration, no doubt they will all continue to feebly struggle along, renouncing one after another hitherto firmly held, but now admitted to be erroneous beliefs, 'till finally the whole fabric of imposition and fraud, deception and humbug, will tumble into eternal, irretrievable ruin; and when such time arrives every man will hold and maintain his own views on religion, the same as he now does on all other subjects, without being, as he now is, held up to scorn and contempt if he does not agree with some or all forms of Christian belief.



In order to secure a fund from which to draw a lucrative revenue, the clergy of all grades of Christians assume to be the proper persons to officiate at the death and burial of all, every one who has sufficient importance and sufficient means from which to draw a sum thought to be equivalent to the efforts made by such clergyman, and that is regulated by the success he is able to produce upon the spectators and surviving relatives, by an appeal to the emotional natures of those who are present, and who by reason of their presence are supposed to be in a sympathetic frame of mind, and capable of being wrought upon, and this theme is there made to assume paramount prominence, the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death, and the importance of living in a state of preparation to meet what a future state is sure to disclose. Another prolific source of revenue is the assumption that the marriage ceremony must be conducted by some ordained minister of the gospel, to make it either civilly or morally binding, but a more enlightened view has in a long protracted contest been taken of the importance of this ceremony, and the clergy have been obliged to divide the revenue with the civil magistrates, and also admit that the latter form is every way as good as the former, and far less expensive. Free thinkers are constantly reminded by Christians, and more especially by the hypocritical and fanatical priests and ministers, when they officiate at funerals, that when they come to the death bed or scene, and are then without the Christian hope, they will experience the most fearful pangs of remorse and fear, and call upon any who may witness their distress, who can pray with any prospect of success, to do so in their behalf, when the real truth is that when death is about to be encountered, and the person about to die is aware of that fact, and has the ability to communicate with those in attendance, no difference is to be perceived in the individuals so situated. Death is realized by every one, who has any mind at all, to be the inevitable destiny of all living things, animal or vegetable, and the instinct that is to be met with in all animals operates to cause both the desire and the effort on the part of each individual of every species to prolong its existence to the utmost limit of possibility, without any reference whatever to any future life, and if no religious impostor had ever invented any religion that taught the existence of God and the devil, heaven and hell, or a future place of happiness to strive for, or place of misery to shun, no mortal that has ever lived would have ever experienced any more either hope or fear, when death had to be met, than the mere instinct of dread of physical suffering, which in most cases precedes death and which teaches every form of animal to prolong his existence as long as possible, and with as much comfort as possible. All free thinkers who have succeeded in so far divesting them-

selves of superstition as to reject the idea of any God or any future life, are entirely destitute of any fear of death, except the mere instinct before referred to, and consequently they are under no apprehension of fear on the one hand, or hope on the other, perfectly indifferent except to the present life. Mere infidels, who have not yet gone as far in unbelief as the atheist, have not so far divested themselves of their early and unfortunate instruction as to feel perfectly sure of their future destiny, and are more or less troubled by fear, and in order to gratify some friend who is more anxious about their future state than they themselves are, sometimes relieve such anxiety by giving expression to some words on which the hope of the survivor can rest, and which is alluded to by the preacher who manages the funeral exercises, and called a death bed repentance. The same kind of repentance is extorted from the criminal who is under sentence of death, and is provided with a spiritual adviser, who in most cases is successful so far as to influence the criminal to secure the hope of heaven, and leave this world, which he can no longer use as a medium with which to gratify the appetites and passions which have made it necessary for society, in self-defense, to place him beyond the power longer to terrify and injure. This whole miserable device is founded on the story of the thief who was said to have manifested penitence and a desire to be simply remembered by his associate, who was on another cross, and who he said had done nothing wrong, when he came into his kingdom, having no more idea what that wish signified than if he had never had such a wish, and the answer he received had no meaning whatever, but the priests of all grades construe it to mean eternal salvation asked for and received, and that success is used as an argument to encourage every criminal and every other person who has spent a whole lifetime without so much as one desire to enter upon a life of morality and virtue until that life is so near ended that no more satisfaction can be got by further indulgence of the depraved appetites and passions; or in other words give God the bones, when the devil has got all the flesh and the marrow out of the bones. Such is death bed repentance, but it is resorted to and encouraged without any authority, or without any value, a mere worthless delusion. The Jew is as serene and confident on the death bed, without any faith in Christ, as the Christian is with the most abundant supply of that faith. The Mahometan is as brave to meet death as either of the foregoing. The pagan, or as we say, heathen, as any other. On the field of battle one is as brave and confident as the other; after the battle the wounded suffer with the same fortitude, and die with the same bravery and resignation and hope, without any reference whatever to any former belief or want of belief, and are as sincerely mourned for by their survivors in the one case as

the other. The writers of the gospels, whoever they were, in describing the closing scenes in the short public career of the hero of the romance, who they name Christ, and who, as is shown by himself making several allusions to the near termination of his own life, had more reason to anticipate the time when this was to occur, and the manner in which he should die, than has ever been the case with any other being, and the purity, virtue and innocence of his life, as certified to by all his admirers, should have caused him to face his own death with more courage and resignation than any other person who has ever died, especially as that death was indispensable to redeem a lost and ruined race, who could be saved in no other way, and an immediate resurrection was clearly seen to be certain, and a return to heaven speedy, but what do we see instead of all this result? We see the most fearful exhibition of terror and dread ever manifested by any mortal of which any account has been preserved, for no criminal of any grade of depravity, no philosopher or martyr, no Jew, Mahometan or pagan, ever sweat blood when in the most extreme peril, and no Christian ever more earnestly and persistently prayed that his life might be spared than did this pattern that is set up for the guide for all mankind to imitate. There is no end to the lying statements that Christian ministers make, respecting exclamations by infidels who are about to die, when they are said to be filled with remorse and apprehension, when none of these statements can be traced to any better source than mere rumor, and no importance ought ever to be given to any statement, whether of hope or despair, made just previous to death in either case, for what is death, in and of itself, when stripped of its surroundings such as the sufferings usually preceding death, when gradual disease undermines and weakens the vital forces, and when a groundless apprehension is felt respecting the future life, which in nearly all cases gives rise to the fear and dread which causes all these expressions of either hope or despair, when the person who is about to die has sufficient mental or physical ability to utter any words, which are very rare in proportion to the number who are both unconscious and indifferent, or whose death is by their own hand, or by that of an assassin, or by accident, so that death, like all other human events, is inevitable, universal and final, and should be regarded with the same composure as the sleep required by the active daily exertions, to invigorate and strengthen the faculties for further exercise, and would be so regarded if religion of any kind was nowhere introduced among men.

The Christian form is no better to either live by or to die by than any other, and no amount of begging or solicitude for the eternal welfare of any soul has ever made, nor can ever make, the slightest impression to change the destiny or alter the condition of any individual of the human



race that has ever or will ever exist, from what its nature unalterably fixed it, and such fixed destiny is to annihilate and extinguish what is falsely named soul, when life ceases to animate the body, and both sink into oblivion, and become as though they had never been. Such a fate abolishes all need of salvation and all anxiety, and dismisses all priests, and makes useless all shrines, dispels all fear, extinguishes all hope, and places the human where his nature intended him to be and qualified him for, and if the great monstrous humbug of superstition, and the worst humbug, deception and imposition of a future life, in which all the mistakes and disappointments of this life could be rectified and adjusted, had never been discovered and promulgated, the human animal would have no more dread of death than any other animal has, the natural desire to prolong existence to its utmost limit and in as much comfort as it is possible to reach. What a wonderful motive is held out as an inducement to alleviate the pangs and soften the grief, when a near and dear friend, child or other relative is taken from the associations which have been continued till the ties of friendship have become so strong as to give intense temporary grief at the prospect of separation, which death is sure to occasion, to be assured that the same ties are to be again re-established in a future life, under certain conditions, if such assurance was capable of being more than expected or hoped for, but when you are told that certain conditions which may and actually do exist will forever make the separation final, one is an offset to the other, and both are false and of no value, and the only real satisfactory state of the mind is to die like the brute, and like him decompose, and have neither hope nor fear, for both are unfounded and imaginary, a mere chimera invented by the priests to perpetuate the imposition which gives them an income, without which they must perish.

Ever since the beginning of history, and in all probability long before, every people about which anything has been disclosed have been in possession of some kind of religious belief, and such religious belief has been the undisputed invention and possession of some one or more who were, or were supposed to be, and readily admitted to be, the oracles or mediums by or through which this religious system was to be administered, for the benefit, in the first place, of these heaven ordained oracles or mediums, by their burdensome exactions of tribute, and finally as a means whereby those who applied to these mediums might obtain satisfactory hopes and assurances, with reference to their life here and hereafter. These religions have each and all, so far as have been discovered, developed into systems or forms more or less complete, and are for the most part all that these people require, and with which they are satisfied, and it is nothing but an unmitigated and inexcusable outrage to disturb



or offer to substitute any other form, to supersede the one to which they have become accustomed and attached. This form of outrageous interference in religious matters is never even attempted by any other religion than the Christian. Their anxiety to strengthen and build up the latest and most worthless of all systems causes the leaders and managers to display the utmost activity and pretended solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of every savage people, and they are also sneaking into every open door, and forcing all closed doors to open to their aggressive missionaries, who, unasked for, thrust themselves upon all they can persuade to receive them, who in most cases, when they discover their outrageous designs drive them out and close the doors forever against them. Every form of religion is nothing better than an unmitigated, unnecessary curse upon any people, a fearful drain upon their resources, to build and decorate temples, altars and shrines, and support and enrich the priesthood, waste uncounted valuable time to attend to useless ceremonies and mummeries connected with outward worship, and to get a little worthless instruction, and when all is done nothing but the same uncertainty is realized that is the case where none of this useless worry is had; nothing is, was, or will be ascertained beyond a guess of the destiny of any individual one hour or moment from the present, and an unalterable destiny and impenetrable mystery envelopes the future of every mortal that has or ever will live or die, and no amount of faith, hope or desire can ever be more than a name, or give more than an imaginary prospect of any future event, either here or hereafter; no one has ever or will ever disclose what is beyond the grave.

It is evident that the author, in order to be consistent, must not only deny the existence of any God, as the phrase is commonly understood, and who is universally revered and worshipped by all grades of human animals, sometimes called beings, and also his rival, the devil, who is as much believed to be a reality by these same beings as that other who is named God, is a reality, but must also deny that all forms of religion that teach the existence of any supernatural or invisible being, to whom worship is either necessary or required, is not only absurd and foolish, but also is false and wicked. The word religion, or the emotion of which that word is the definition, ought never to have had a place in the animal department of the works of nature, any more than it has a place in the vegetable or mineral department. They all emanate from the same source, are all subject to the same governing, spontaneous and self-propagating natural laws, which in the beginning of the process of creation produced the germ from which all life and all inanimate matter were developed in the past, and are all sustained and made to conform to the condition which is assigned to each department into which matter

is divided, without the intervention of intelligence, and before any intelligence was developed, and also before any such a low grade of life was possible as would produce motion. But, inasmuch as we find that grade of animal life which we call human universally in possession of some form of religion, and instinctively, as some writers assert (but which is not admitted), worship and reverence an invisible and incomprehensible supernatural being, it is therefore inferred there must be a sufficient cause to produce such an effect, the adherents and devotees of that system, which like all others, is false, regard every other besides theirs as spurious and pernicious, and the same is true of every other false religion. There is not, and in the nature of things, there never can be, any uniformity among the different races and tribes into which the human animal is divided, as long as the conditions and circumstances under which they are situated are without precise uniformity, and as no human intelligence is able to ascertain what would be the most desirable environment for himself even to make him satisfied and contented, much less can any amount of supposed superior judgment dictate to any other mortal anything better than experiment. It cannot with much certainty be determined what is regarded by other nations and peoples than the one to which any individual himself belongs, as the best form of religion to give the required satisfaction, but no other than the Christian ever attempts to interfere with the private judgment of his neighbors unasked, but the Christian fanatic is never satisfied to let anybody alone, but as far as possible, under the false impression or assumption that he alone is wise enough to instruct every other person, and impudent enough to interfere without invitation with what is none of his concern, under the false impression that it is a duty, and all this is the universal characteristic of all grades of Christians, and for a very apparent reason, which is that it is the only way any impression can be made, for no one will ever or ever has considered it of enough importance to as much as desire to become a Christian until, when overcome by entreaty or appeal, consent to be identified with such a rascally set as the church of Christ the world over includes among its members.

The invention, by the first set of impostors who founded the nucleus which has since developed into the Christian church, of the system of proselytism, which is now known as the missionary enterprise, and has in process of time become thoroughly organized, was a device requiring a vast sum of money to enable any one of the various branches of the church to outdo the others, and penetrate wild and inhospitable countries to introduce the Christian religion, and overthrow that by which these ignorant people had lived hitherto with satisfaction, for the reason,

as they assert, that the souls of these degraded people might be saved and conducted to the Christian's heaven, and thus escape the Christian's hell, when this whole scheme was merely one of robbery and extortion, to collect money to keep the whole fabric of fraud and imposition at home from sinking into its deserved oblivion and ruin, and no missionary ever received a dollar so collected except to fit him out and pay his passage to the port of destination, when he was required to draw his pay what he had, from the people among whom he forced his unasked for services, and no one of all the vast army of missionaries was able to make any impression on any but the lowest grades of intellect, and get more than a poor living.

While it is freely admitted that some individuals can be found included in the Christian church, and also in every kind of church, who are every way worthy of imitation, as being an example for others to follow, it is denied that they are made so by such association, and are no better than can be found outside of such church in as large a proportion relatively, but on the other hand the contemptibly meanest man on earth is the Christian hypocrite, and they are far more numerous relatively than are those who are outraged and defiled by association with such vile wretches, as these same hypocrites are shown to have been when detected, as a few only of them ever are, because the cloak of a false religion under which they operate conceals them from suspicion, and when detected excuses and mitigates their crimes, and provides a way of escape from the wrath to come, through repentance and faith, and they can point to the case of the thief on the cross, who sought and obtained remission and forgiveness when life was nearly extinct. These vile wretches seek and obtain admission among what is commonly but erroneously thought to be a more respectable company of associates than those are from whom he outwardly has separated himself, by pretending to be regenerated, or born again, caused in all cases by emotional excitement, produced by magnetic or sympathetic emotional power of the individual to which he has been persuaded to listen. The scheme which the orthodox Christian alone, of all the different organizations that are included among those nations who are called Christians, has invented as an excuse for maintaining and propagating some peculiar unimportant dogmas, which he has named regeneration, or a new birth, so indispensable to salvation that no one of all the vast number who have never heard of Christ, or of those who have heard of him, but have not believed on him in a certain prescribed way, are all now in an endless hell of torment, has operated so diametrically opposite to the manner which the inventors of this humbug would expect it to operate, as to cause, instead of any increase of piety and holiness among those



who profess to have been regenerated, that a constant diminution of numbers, and a constant increase of wicked rascals, who are in fellowship with such bodies of Christians, that very little dependence is now put upon that resource by which to fill the gaps that are constantly being made by death and desertion. It now begins to be perceived by a few of the most liberal of the fanatical bigots who are leaders of the rank and file that the great mistake of all past theology has been made, by the false statement put forth in that, to them, sacred and holy book, which they name the Holy Bible, which asserts in a positive statement, after the absurd and lying manner in which man and woman originated, another lie of greater absurdity, to account for the origin of evil or sin, by eating certain forbidden or prohibited fruit, being instructed to do so by a serpent, or as we call it a snake, and that violation of a previous command and admonition of another being, who they had never seen, but had merely heard his order and threat, but, as far as is related, had no way to ascertain that the voice they first heard proceeded from any source superior to the serpent, and that simple act of disobedience, without any intentional or willful disregard of such order, but merely a natural wish or desire to be made aware of what ingredients the fruit of this tree of knowledge was composed, acted on the advice of this serpent, who, having vocal organs, they could hear him converse in a language familiar to them, and also could see him, and who assured them in the most positive manner that the orders they had received was nothing more important than advice, and that such advice was bad, and they, or the woman, who was first conversed with, was by following such advice never to know any more than they already knew, and the knowledge she then had was of no value, and the advice he gave had every appearance of being, and actually was, of greater value than the former advice to refrain from eating. Now, as foolish and wicked as such a statement ought to have been discovered to be when it was first invented, by nobody knows who, or when, it has taken the wisdom of the whole human race who have ever had this Bible, more than six thousand years to produce a single one of all the vast number who have lived and died up to the present time, to produce one doubt as to its truth or its value, except by those who entirely reject it as spurious and false, and not only is the foregoing admission, shameful as it is to have to make such admission, a true one, but it is also true that on this stupid and wicked lie has been built the whole system, which has fastened itself on all the Christian nations of the earth in which Christianity is an organized force, with such a firm grasp, that most likely another two thousand years will be required, before those who are directly interested to have this state of things remain as it now is, will be so far overcome by the demonstra-



tions of science as to be obliged, on account of those who are now relied on to support this useless set of paid impostors becoming enough instructed in the demonstrations of science to withhold the means to support this useless humbug, called the Christian religion, when it must die for the want of the means of subsistence, for it is a notorious fact that those who are employed in the various grades of ecclesiastical administration of the affairs of this monstrous system, in all its departments, is an inexhaustible drain upon the resources of any community, without rendering any valuable return, but only results in a positive damage to the community in general, and to each individual in particular.

The scheme of salvation, through or by means of a crucified redeemer, which is the foundation on which that scheme is built, has no place in that system, unless there was a previous necessity for such salvation, by reason of some inherent defect in human nature, that could not be remedied without resorting to such a monstrously unreasonable way as the one invented by the set of impostors who first introduced this wicked and cruel scheme, and brought into view a fictitious victim, by whose death this whole defect would be remedied, or at least atoned for, and there was no previous necessity for any atonement unless the fall of the first human pair, before any increase had begun, actually went through the precise experience, just as it is recorded in Genesis, and they never went through that experience unless they were created in the precise way or manner there described, and they were never created in that manner, nor at that time, as science is now able to prove; and revelation, as the Bible is called, is not able to prove, but only assert, and none of the best minds, and also none of the best scholars, now even pretend to place any reliance upon any of the mythical and improbable statements, as being any more reliable than a dream, and when so much is depending on accuracy as the eternal salvation of the souls of the whole human race in all time, is made to depend on absolute accuracy of statement, and when such accuracy is guaranteed by an appeal to divine direction, the consequences of failure have the effect to destroy any system based on these impossible statements. No variety of religion could ever have been invented, and none could have ever been successful, if it was not so obscured by mystery as to require a privileged class of experts to at least partially explain these mysteries, and this class has been divided and subdivided into grades, having more and greater authority, as these grades are removed above the ordinary average of intellectual capacity of the individuals, who adhere to any of the various sects into which the Christian, Mahometan or pagan world is divided, and these experts derive their authority from a superior authority, constantly growing into a higher grade, till it reaches the supreme authority, who is to decide all

questions and mysteries that exceed the ability of inferior grades to comprehend or explain. This intellectual machinery is so complicated and extensive, among all forms of religions, that no person not an adherent of any particular form can comprehend the system, except in a general way, and no adherents of any of these systems are allowed to understand more than the simplest rudiments of such system at first, but when they are advanced, and are not too forward to need restraint, these mysteries are gradually explained, and when the novice has been thoroughly tested, and his sincerity and ability has been ascertained by those who are his instructors, so as to justify an examination by a higher grade of ecclesiastics, and that grade reports to a still higher one, then the novice has developed into maturity, that entitles him to be initiated into communion and fellowship with those that have previously been put through that preparatory discipline, and then what does he get as a reward for all this? In the Christian orthodox, if he was converted under Baptist influence, he must submit to immersion of the whole body in water in public, after arriving at adult age, and after making public announcement that he is converted from his former practice of inherent sin to a practice of its opposite, a holy life, and this immersion is obligatory. If the novice seeking admission into fellowship with a Presbyterian or Congregational church has had water applied by an ordained minister in infancy, in no other way than mere sprinkling of the forehead, that is sufficient, but if not so applied the adult must then submit to this ceremony, and this must, as in the former case, follow an announcement of renunciation of his former life and an acceptance or belief in their creed, and a like process is obligatory in the Methodist, with some unimportant variations he must go through a mock ceremony in public, and this in all cases is the initiation to the mysteries that are to follow, and this process is the first and most simple mystery; but, simple as it is, it is only an emblem of purity, and no one of all the vast number that have submitted to it, and thus got admission into a Christian church have ever perceived the slightest effect on the moral character or on the outward life of any individual, and he himself is as far from comprehending its value or significance as he was before all this rigmarole, and will forever so remain. The next and greater mystery he encounters is the communion, or participation of the Lord's supper, another emblem, which consists in metaphorically eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the son of God, or Jesus Christ, who was crucified, as they assert, to make salvation possible. The Catholic hierarchy, or ruling power, have arrived, after many hundred years of discussion, to the point of progress that they are able to maintain and enforce the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the real, literal, actual body in the consecrated wafer, which they give to the sinner

after he has confessed his sins to the priest, and received absolution of the son of God, and the wine, which they withhold from the same communicant, but drink it themselves, is his real blood; but the Protestant is far more consistent, and nearer following the directions which the new testament describes is the way this observance must be regarded, if regarded at all, for there is not the slightest reason to suppose that there was any intention to make any use of this incident, more than any other in his life, and the utmost significance it ever was intended to have, if any, by those who first invented this absurd ceremony, was as an emblem or remembrance of the sacrifice made to procure salvation. All this unmeaning mummary has never been explained, and never will be, for it has not produced the slightest effect on the moral character or on the outward life of any person, and never can, for it is nothing but a mockery, a mere human device, without either divine authority or sanction, but an unexplained mystery, and from one to another these great pretended mysteries are unfolded, till they finally become absolutely bewildering, and often drive the honest, simple victim to suicide or insanity, and on the other hand those that are too smart and intelligent to be made dupes of are either developed into the most dangerous class of criminals the world can produce, or else the most consummate hypocrites and impostors, to continue from age to age the same system of fraud and deception, and as this is known to be the system now in use in Christian lands, it is reasonable and proper to conclude that a like system is in use in other religions, with variations to adapt these ceremonies to the conditions that are peculiar to the various races and tribes that together compose the human family, and furthermore, all this useless ceremony has its root, and is the product of nothing better or more substantial than a baseless assumption, impossible to verify, and too improbable to be worth examination or refutation, and is only entitled to denial, but it must be admitted it is still powerful enough to hold in its grasp, so unyielding and tenacious, substantially the whole human race, for no other reason than that it professes to be able to reveal to mortals what is beyond this life, and there is not, and there never was, and there never will be, a living being that can with anything better than possibility foretell what another moment beyond the present will disclose, but the ability to ascertain the fact (as it is only assumed there is such a fact) that the human animal has a soul differing in kind from any other animal all rests upon another unfounded assumption, that the Bible on that question is true, and the truth of the Bible rests on another more than unfounded assumption, a downright lie, and well known to be such by the wicked wretches who were the authors or inventors of that lie, that God revealed this knowledge of the immortal soul of man when the



breath of life was breathed by this God into the nostril of this clay image, afterwards called man, when by that process he became a living soul, when he was only a living body, if anything at all but the same lump of mud he was before, and all the various opinions and counter opinions of all the critics and commentators that for nearly four thousand years have, with the utmost patience and assiduity, endeavored to find something better and more substantial than mere assumption, and wholly up to this time without success, till at last the whole effort is now abandoned, and the greatest and best scholars and the theologians have over their signatures, and orally in public, declared that the Bible is a mere human production, without any better right to claim for it inspiration than any history has, or any better claim to be considered either a teacher of a high grade of morality, or to be regarded prophetic, than any ancient writing or mythology of an ancient philosopher or moralist, but the manner in which this imposition is guarded, and the precautions adopted to keep the deception from being discovered and exposed, is worthy of an extended description, for nothing is of greater importance than for the perpetrators of any kind of humbug and deception from being discovered and exposed, and this precaution increases in intensity as the discovery develops opposition strong enough to demand revision of former undiscovered inconsistencies. The detestable group of monstrous, wicked, false doctrines that form the foundation of all the orthodox churches, were produced by some one or more fanatical impostor, such as Calvin, Luther, Wesley, and others similar to them, in making what in their time was considered a new discovery, and their associates and successors approved and elaborated such new discovery, and after more or less hesitation and modification accepted and incorporated such new discovery, and started what in process of time became a new sect, with a creed which distinctly defined and prescribed, by the highest authority of the ecclesiastical body then available, what should be the belief and teaching of every one who should be permitted to give religious instruction in public or private. Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Regeneration, Election, Predestination, Foreordination, Immortality, Resurrection, Eternal Infant Damnation, and much other equally preposterous and unimportant trash to all the outsiders, and absolutely mysterious and unexplainable to an insider, but insisted on as indispensable to be not only assented to by an aspirant of the right to become an instructor of the lower grades, by whom he expected to be employed, and from whom he might receive wages sufficient to support himself and family, and give no return of any intrinsic value. The first elaborate creed that was made after the reformation inaugurated by Luther, and continued by Calvin and others, was contrived at Westmin-



ster, about three hundred years ago, by a convention of the most bigoted fanatics and unmitigated religious rascals that ever disgraced the Christian name, who were in constant session more than seven years, and the final result was the Westminster confession of faith, on whose absurd and wicked dogmas is erected the Presbyterian church as we now have it. This confession was formulated after prolonged and earnest debate, and many mutual concessions, and transmitted to successive generations in two forms, called the longer or larger catechism, and the shorter or smaller catechism. The long catechism was for the use and instructions of students who were aspiring to become ministers of the gospel. The shorter catechism was for Sunday-school teachers and parents to instruct their children, and other illiterate, weak minded people, who were from time to time brought within their influence. Both of these have survived and are in full force at the present time, without the slightest modification being made to any of the horrible doctrines put forth and adopted by all Presbyterians from its first introduction, two hundred and fifty years ago, till very recently, when there has sprung up in that most respectable body an urgent and determined demand for a revision of the creed so long satisfactory, and the elimination of many of the most repulsive doctrines now held. In order that no mistake and no want of uniformity should be possible, the instigators of this scheme invented an auxiliary scheme, through which this mess of stuff called doctrine should be filtered or purified, and this machinery is named Theology, a Greek word signifying the science of God, and in process of time secured by means of the generosity of some rich and credulous dupe, who could be persuaded during life to provide in the disposition of his wealth, to take effect at his death, to leave by will or devise a sum sufficient to found and endow theological seminaries in the orthodox denominations of Christians, or monasteries in the Catholic church, and place them in charge of those who they could safely rely upon to instruct those who, upon a rigid examination, were found worthy to enter these preparatory mental gymnasiums, to be put through a course of instruction lasting four years; after having received, before making such application for admission, a four years' course of collegiate mental discipline and instruction, and receiving a diploma or certificate from such college, and in addition giving the required proof of genuine conversion and of membership in the denomination of which this seminary is the exponent, and being of mature age and free from physical disability, giving unreserved approval and assent of the creed in which they are to be instructed, and furnishing the required funds to reimburse the trustees, and allow a liberal profit to such trustees, so as to make sufficient income to increase the facilities, and after a four years' course of

discipline and instruction are completed, a solemn oath is required that they will always maintain, explain, uphold and enforce the peculiar doctrine and mysteries into which they have been initiated, as long as life and strength permit; then another diploma issues, after being signed by the proper authority, and is delivered to the graduate, and that is his passport or recommendation to a lower grade of ecclesiastical authority, by whom the graduate, on application, is ordained or set apart, and ready to be employed to instruct in religious humbugs to such an ignorant and credulous set of people as he can secure, and then such position is secured, and a trial of ability satisfies the people over whom he is expected to preside, another set of inferior ecclesiastical humbugs install him into the so-called sacred office of pastor or teacher, and all this process is indispensable before any application for employment can be considered, and even after all this rigmarole has been gone through with, and the position is secured, the victim is closely watched, and the moment he is discovered to deviate from the creed to which he has sworn allegiance, he is first reprimanded, if he persists he is admonished, if refractory he is disciplined, if incorrigible he is expelled, his source of income is dried up, and he must seek employment in some other avocation, if he is not sufficiently able to defy any authority which he has by this time discovered to be unauthorized and worthless, and concludes to depend on his own judgment, and accept such remuneration as he can get from those who adhere to him and are satisfied with his instructions.

The foregoing is substantially the process in use in every branch of the Christian church, and is the way the merciless grip has been applied to every individual who has been authorized to preach the gospel to civilized or savage men since theology was first invented and creeds made, and there is not the least prospect that the near future will see any deviation from the foregoing complicated system.

It never has been known to any except the faithful who are in the secret, and who have faithfully kept the secret, that all the theological institutions in this country, if not in the world, are founded and endowed, as has been previously described, by some rich dupe, who has yielded to entreaty so persistent as to be obliged to comply, but has in every case obliged the applicant to accept such gift with the condition, that as soon as any deviation from a certain manner in which he directed the institution founded by his generosity should be conducted, or any departure from the theology approved by him, should occur, the fund itself would be forfeited, and such conditions make it impossible for any revision of any creed on which every one of these institutions are founded; and when, as in the case of Andover, the civil law is invoked to pay salaries by compulsion which have been earned by its professors, who are

accused of heresy by the trustees, who assert they hold and teach unauthorized doctrines, if a decision is rendered sustaining the professors, and directing their pay and reinstatement, down goes the great and venerated institution, the Andover Seminary, that will be destroyed simply because those in charge refused to allow the professors who desired to do so, to teach that salvation by the atonement or sacrifice of Christ could be extended to such in a future life as had in this life not been offered such salvation; and such will be the fate of the Princeton Theological Seminary if any revision of the Presbyterian creed, made two hundred and fifty years ago at Westminster, is permitted, as is now demanded by a large and determined class of young ministers, who begin to perceive that error can no longer be successful when it is discovered and exposed.

Every form of religion has found it necessary to invent means to teach in a wholesale manner its simplest and also most intricate mysteries, and for that purpose only has the imposition of the Sabbath day been established among such of the human race as have had any portion of the Bible, and although the race had managed to subsist and prosper for two thousand years or more before the Jewish religion was invented without any Sabbath day, or without any religion whatever, as soon as that form had reached sufficient development as would permit the introduction of law, the arch impostor who invented that monstrous system of fraud and deception pretended to have business on Mount Sinai, and when time enough had elapsed to enable him to prepare the laws, and engrave them on a marble slab, which was prepared beforehand, so as to make the people believe God had done this work, when no one up to that time among the common people ever had seen any writing, and no one but himself could read what was written, and that mess of rubbish called the ten commandments has been transmitted to the present time, and is still in force as much as in any former age, and contains all the authority there ever was for observing one day of the week more than another among the Jews, but the Christian disregards the seventh day, and without any authority, or even giving any reason worth naming, has substituted the first day of the week as Sunday, by the false statement that the crucified Christ rose from the grave on the first day of the week, when, unless the account of that scandalous transaction is itself a lie, the dead body of Christ was in the grave only two nights and one day, notwithstanding he himself repeatedly asserted that he would do precisely as the prophet Jonah had done, when he remained in the whale's belly three days and three nights. These accounts are both stupid lies, and a disgrace to their author, whoever he was, and a still greater disgrace to any intelligent human being, to consent to be



imposed upon by such silly twaddle as this. The inventors of the Sabbath day had nothing but a selfish object in pretending to be so disinterested for the physical well being of their dupes, for in one place, the fourth commandment, in reference to the reason they give as why all men should refrain from labor was for in that day God rested from the creative work, and in another place in Deuteronomy, the reason is given because that was the day ye were delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. The Jews of our day deny their ancestors were ever in Egypt as slaves at all, and there consequently is, nor never was, any greater authority or reason why any day was any more sacred than another, greater than what human laws are able to compel obedience to, so that the priestly impostors might fasten their impositions, and from time to time increase such imposition by adding more and greater humbugs, as the development of mankind made each successive age more capable than their predecessor to invent, till at last they have become intolerable, and signs are present that give future generations some reason to hope that religion, which only has to do with a future life, will be abolished, and morality, which has only to do with the present life, will take its place. The sanguinary struggles that always take place, when any form of religion to supersede the form already in use among any given people, have caused vastly more bloodshed and misery in the past than all other causes combined, for it rouses into activity the lying, corrupt set of rascals who invented the former religion, to defend and keep alive the means by which they have been able to thrive and spread, and endeavor to make permanent and universal that which had never any value, but was a fruitful source of revenue, to enable the priesthood of various grades to impose one deception after another, and increase their income as avarice was stimulated in proportion as the means to satisfy it were forthcoming. It must not be inferred that the denunciations in the foregoing statements apply with equal force to all who are connected with such corrupt bodies, but none of these statements are too strong to describe the inventors and leaders in the deception, and the crime grows less odious as the successive grades of authority are reached, till it is to be presumed, and is freely admitted, that many who are the most sincere and honest, who have been made victims of this deception, do not see that they have been imposed upon till later in life, and when it is gradually revealed to their more mature experience that more or less doubt is admissible, and doubt gives place to conviction, and conviction to a desire to abandon the calling upon which they and their families have depended for the means of support, they prefer to become only mere hypocrites, and pretend to still believe what they do not believe, rather than after all the sacrifice of the time and the



money which was spent in preparation to obtain this lucrative situation should be given up, and they, by the degrading act of excommunication, be made ineligible for further service in the calling to which they have dedicated their former life, and also severing many social ties, which have become too strong to admit of giving up for a mere abstraction of no value to any one. Infidels never can organize or form any creed, for no two are agreed on any given question relating to a future life, but they are all of one mind in general agreement, to endeavor by ridicule and opposition to undermine the Bible as a divine inspiration or revelation, and instruct the young to shun the Bible, and all those who found their systems on its foolish and untruthful statements, and, in consequence of the impression already made by the few infidels who are bold enough to come out and openly declare their infidelity, it is fast losing its former stronghold on the masses of the people of any community, who, although they are supplied with copies, and are permitted and urged to read it, scarcely ever open it from one month to another, and it is now very rarely the case that any person who is of average intelligence on all worldly or secular subjects, on being questioned as to their knowledge on the most familiar and simple question of Bible history or narrative, can give anything but the most lamentable display of ignorance, and this ignorance extends to those who are selected to teach in the Sunday-school, and obliges those who are competent to instruct the average teacher to give such weekly instruction to the teachers to prevent erroneous instruction being given, and this humiliating confession is the main reason why such poor success is realized in making any lasting impression on the children's mind, which can be made to disappear in a small amount of such opposite instruction, which the most illiterate infidel is always ready to give, to neutralize any of the weak, silly trash which the most gifted Sunday-school teacher can give. Were it not that it would be too disgusting to any right minded man to do so contemptible an act, it would be a revelation to stand by and listen to the average Sunday-school teacher attempt to instruct the average pupils. The author himself was once for two years a teacher in two Sunday-schools on every Sabbath, and was much more competent than the average, and I hesitate not to say that the impression I made was so imperceptible that a microscope could not reveal it, in any other direction than to cultivate and strengthen superstition, in the form of reverence for the Sabbath, the Bible, the church, and the ordinances thereof, and that I now see was a damage which I hope in some degree to repair in the volume now drawing to a close, as well of the life of him who is the writer thereof. At my time of life, which has been a busy one, when physical work was beyond my strength, I was averse to sitting in idle-

ness, when there was a congenial work that I felt I could do. I wanted to earn a noble reputation, that will survive long after I have been consigned to my inevitable destiny, hence my ambition was to accomplish some work in such a manner that some of my successors will proclaim, "That man has not lived in vain," and if my name is not carved on monumental marble, let it be indelibly stamped on the generations yet to be born; but facing the loneliness of my remaining short period of life, I do wholly resign that worthless hope with which the Christian with a golden thread embroiders his fanciful future existence, and am content with the same fate that all living things will and ever have experienced, whether human or other animal, indiscriminate and utter annihilation.

THE END.









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